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WESTERN HISTORIC TRAILS CENTER

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Comprehensive Plan

DEC 1995

96-0080-P

August 1995

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Comprehensive Plan

August 1995

WESTERN HISTORIC TRAILS CENTER

Council Bluffs, Iowa

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service • Denver Service Center

RECOMMENDED:

Kenneth Raithel, Jr. April 25, 1991
Manager, Central Team, Denver Service Center

APPROVED:

William W. Schenk
Regional Director, Midwest Region May 30, 1995

SUMMARY

On November 29, 1989, Congress enacted Public Law 101-191, directing the secretary of the interior to plan for and design a trails interpretive facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, that is devoted to interpreting the role of western trails in the development and westward expansion of the United States. This westward movement developed along a system of trails across the American continent, trails that were used by pioneers, explorers, religious groups, and scientists. Specifically, PL 101-191 was intended to enhance the public's appreciation of the Mormon Pioneer, Lewis and Clark, and Oregon National Historic Trails at a new center in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The trails center will be operated by a qualified nonfederal entity who will interpret the history, development, and use of these three national historic trails in Iowa and the adjacent region (see appendix A).

As requested in PL 101-191, the *Draft Comprehensive Plan / Environmental Assessment* describes possible sites and operators for the trails center, what kinds and sizes of facilities are needed for the center and accompanying visitor use, what level of staffing is necessary, and what the relationship should be between the site, the building, and the building functions. Two site alternatives were analyzed in detail, as were the impacts of building the center at either site.

Based on public review and comment on the draft plan, the National Park Service (NPS) regional director chose one of the site alternatives, South 24th Street, as the approved site and concept for the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs. This approved *Comprehensive Plan* is presented in this document.

The South 24th Street site was selected based on the preferences expressed at public meetings, open houses, and through written comments. Although this site is not visible from the city and does not have the panoramic views of other alternative sites, it provides easy access from the highway, a quality visitor experience, and direct access to the Missouri River – the cornerstone of all of the area trails. Development costs for the trails center are estimated to be about $12 million.

The legislation mandating this plan created a problem by including the Oregon Trail. The designated route of the Oregon National Historic Trail does not cross Iowa but passes south of it entering Nebraska from Kansas near Ft. Kearney, some 200 miles west of Council Bluffs. However, the favored branch of the California National Historic Trail designated in 1992 originated in Council Bluffs. It would be preferable to interpret the California Trail instead of the Oregon Trail at the trails center; however, both the California and the Oregon National Historic Trails will be interpreted.

The major beneficial impacts of building the center will be increased revenues from tourism, the creation of four to six new jobs, and some socioeconomic benefits to the community. The major adverse impacts will be the removal of approximately 85 acres of farmland from production, including 25 acres of prime farmland. See the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* for more detailed discussion of the impacts.

The NPS regional director has concluded that this plan will not result in significant impacts on the human environment and has prepared a finding of no significant impact (see appendix B).

Although the *Comprehensive Plan* has been approved by the NPS Midwest Regional Office director, plan implementation will still require several steps — among them the commitment of an operator, matching local funding contributions, land acquisition, additional appropriation of construction funds, and completion of construction documents.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.), as amended, authorizes the establishment of national historic trails to protect and preserve historic routes that are nationally significant in the growth of our nation for public use and enjoyment. Nine national historic trails have been authorized, including the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails (see National Trails System map). Although the amendments to the act that authorized these trails basically prohibit direct federal involvement in acquiring lands and developing facilities for the protection and public use of the trails, the language does provide an exception for one trail interpretation site for each trail in each state crossed by the trail.

To enhance the interpretation and public appreciation of the national historic trails, Congress enacted Public Law 101-191 (103 Stat. 1697) on November 29, 1989, directing the secretary of the interior to plan for and design a trails interpretive facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, that is devoted to interpreting the role of western trails in the development and expansion of the United States (see appendix A and Region and Vicinity maps). In the legislation, Congress noted that "the nineteenth century American westward movement was an important cultural event in shaping the post-colonial history of the United States." This westward movement "consisted of journeys along a system of trails across the American continent by pioneers, explorers, religious groups, and scientists," and "additional recognition and interpretation is appropriate in light of the national scope of the nineteenth century American westward movement." Specifically, the trails center would be operated by a qualified nonfederal entity who would interpret the history, development, and use of the Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Oregon National Historic Trails in Iowa and the adjacent region. It would be preferable to interpret the California Trail instead of the Oregon Trail at the trails center; however, both the California and the Oregon National Historic Trails will be interpreted.

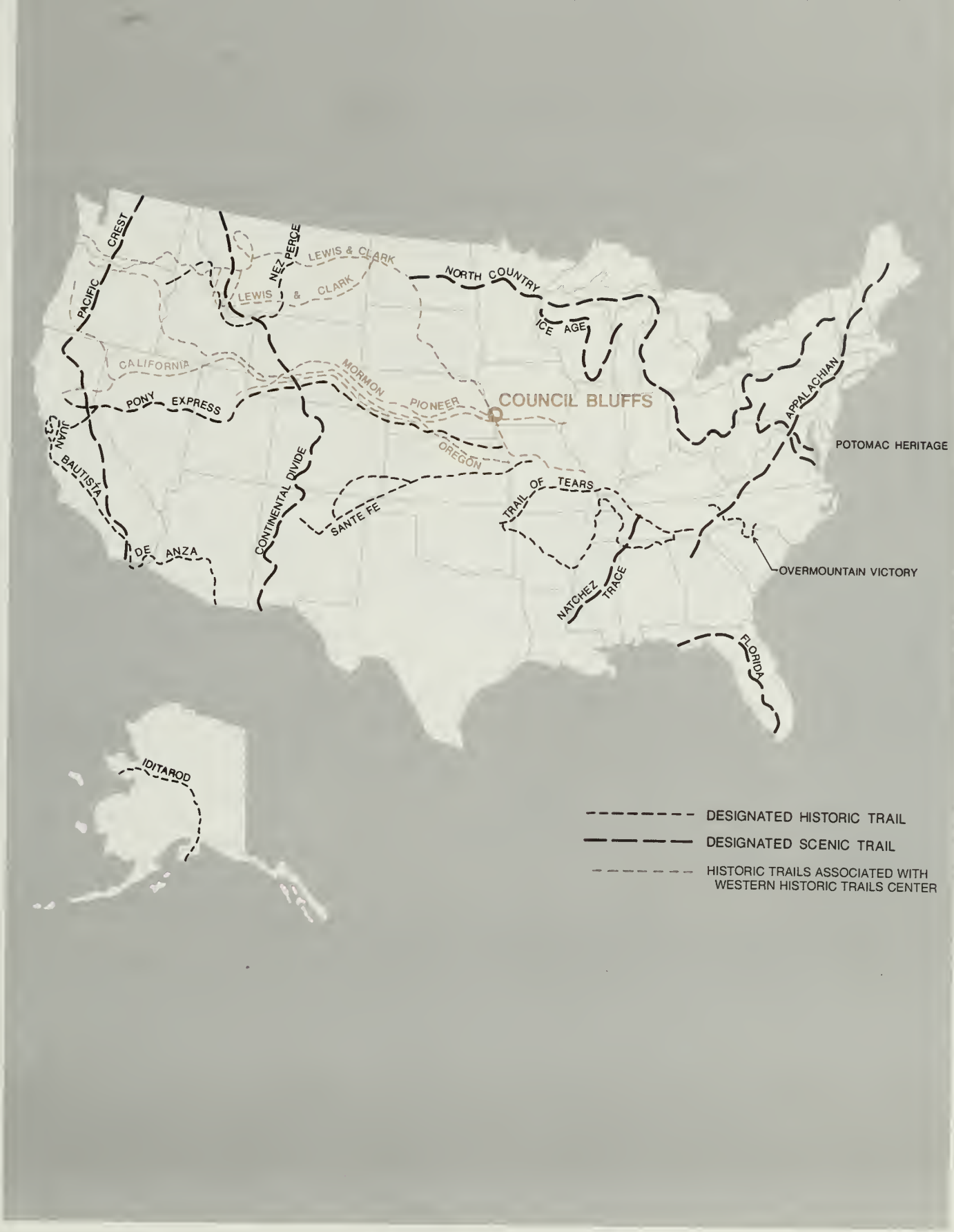
In April 1991 the National Park Service distributed the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* for the trails center in Council Bluffs. This draft plan analyzed possible sites for the center (18 sites were considered), the number of visitors that could be expected (this was done by comparing other comparable facilities), the facilities that would be needed to meet legislative intent and visitor use, and potential operators for the center. Two of the sites were then considered in greater detail, and concepts for the site and building were considered — a location at Fairmount Park, high on a bluff with panoramic views of the Missouri, and a location at South 24th Street with direct access to the Missouri River. The impacts on the environment and the community from building the center at either location were then analyzed. The draft plan was considered by the public and various NPS offices. Based on public review and comment, the NPS Midwest Regional Office selected the South 24th Street site for the center. Incorporating appropriate public comments, this final plan presents the site and building concepts for that site.

The major beneficial impacts of building the center at the South 24th Street site will be increased revenues from tourism, the creation of four to six new jobs, and some socioeconomic benefits to the community; the major adverse impacts will be the removal of approximately 85 acres of farmland from production, including 25 acres of prime farmland.

Further details about the other sites considered, the Fairmount Park site alternative, and impacts on the environment and the community can be found in the draft plan.

The NPS regional director has concluded that this plan will not result in significant impacts on the human environment and has prepared a finding of no significant impact (see appendix B). Compliance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act has been completed.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been completed, except for necessary archeological surveys, which will be accomplished prior to any actual construction.



National Trails System

Western Historic Trails Center

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Region

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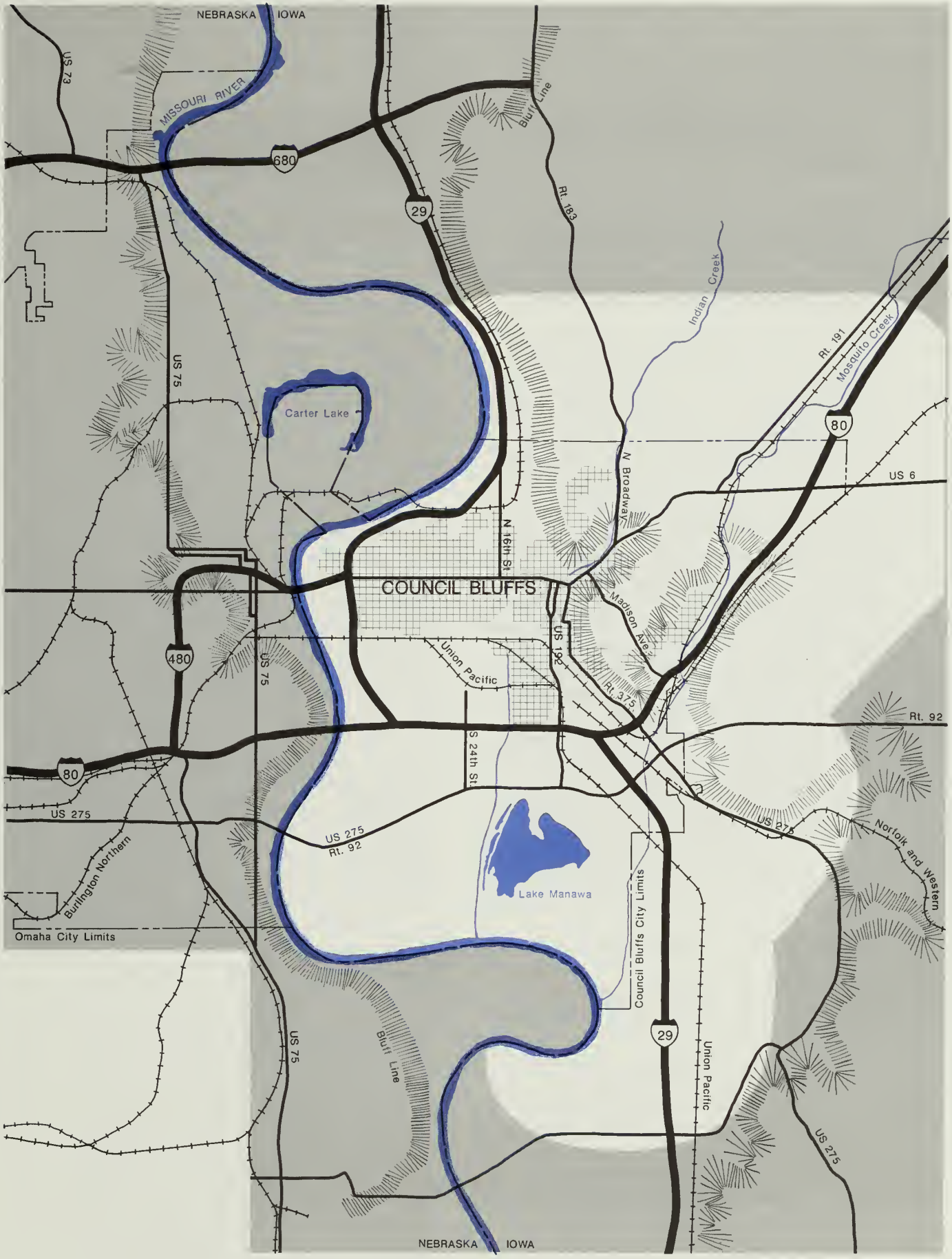

Vicinity

Western Historic Trails Center

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PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

Background

This project has been actively pursued since 1985, when the state Recreation, Tourism, and Leisure Study Committee completed its *Western Historic Trails Center Feasibility Study* (DeBord-Dunbar Partnership et al. 1986), which recommended a facility to commemorate the western trails through Iowa. The Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, the Iowa Development Commission, InterNorth Foundation, and Council Bluffs Savings Bank sponsored the study, which was prepared by private consultants. A nonprofit corporation, Western Historic Trails Center, Inc., was established by the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce to lobby for and aid in the establishment of the trails center. In 1986 legislation was introduced by the Iowa congressional delegation for establishment of a trails center at Council Bluffs. Also in 1986 the Chamber of Commerce commissioned a study by three prominent historians entitled *Why a National Western Historic Trails Center Is Needed and Why It Should Be in Council Bluffs, Iowa.* Based on the prior feasibility study, the chamber commissioned a development cost study in 1987. With this background material, lobbying efforts by Western Historic Trails Center, Inc. gained momentum, resulting finally in the passage of PL 101-191 on November 29, 1989.

Purpose

The legislation for the Western Historic Trails Center (PL 101-191) specifies the following purposes:

> To recognize the system of western trails established in furtherance of the National Trails System Act because of their national historic and cultural significance; and to provide the public with an interpretive facility devoted to the vital role of the western trails in the development of the United States.
>
> Interpreting the history of development and use in the State of Iowa and the adjacent region of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and the Oregon National Historic Trail.

The legislated purpose of this plan is to prepare a plan and design for a trails interpretive center that will present the role that the Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, and Oregon National Historic Trails played in the development of the Council Bluffs region, Iowa, and the nation. Because no such facility currently exists in the Council Bluffs region, this planning document explores appropriate development alternatives, determines facility needs, identifies suitable development sites, estimates staffing levels, identifies interpretive themes, and identifies suitable land acquisition methods for the selected site.

The final site and building designs have been based on the inputs of the design team and the facility operator.

The enabling legislation specifically precludes its operation by a federal entity. It also establishes the participation level of nonfederal entities associated with the project. One-third of the total project costs must be from local sources (see appendix A).

Issues

Several issues were addressed and resolved to plan for the trails center.

1. The legislation mandating this *Comprehensive Plan* and preliminary design for a trails interpretive facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, created a problem. In addition to providing for the interpretation of the history, development, and use of the Lewis and Clark and Mormon Pioneer trails, the legislation included the Oregon Trail. The Oregon National

Historic Trail originated in Independence, Missouri, and passed through northeast Kansas before connecting with the Platte River at Fort Kearney, Nebraska, some 200 miles west of Iowa. Given that existing designation, it would be preferable to eliminate interpretation of the Oregon Trail at Council Bluffs and concentrate instead on the California Trail. One branch of the California Trail, which proved to be the favored branch of westward travelers, originated in Council Bluffs. The California Trail has been designated as the California National Historic Trail and thus has relevance to both Council Bluffs and the proposed trails center; the Oregon Trail does not. Both trails, however, will be interpreted.

2. A suitable development site had to be selected for the trails center. Many factors influence site selection, including physical development constraints, the presence of tangible trails-related resources, site visibility and accessibility, and the historic integrity of the site.

3. A realistic estimate of the expected level of visitation at the facility had to be determined. The visitation estimate in the *Western Historic Trails Center Feasibility Study* appeared to be overstated, giving the impression of greater demand for the facility than may actually exist. Verifiable estimates were essential because the expected visitation would be the basis for most aspects of facility design.

   The number of visitors would also indicate the relative amount of economic benefit that the city could expect as a result of trails center development. Any expansion of the local economy because of the center would hinge on the amount spent by visitors.

4. An operator for the facility was needed. The legislation specifies only that the operator had to be a qualified nonfederal entity. Several additional criteria were needed to ensure that the operator was qualified.

5. For the purpose of constructing the trails center, the land acquisition strategy had to be defined. Based on the legislation, the secretary of the interior may acquire lands or interests in lands by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. Federal funds to carry out the plan may be expended on a two-for-one (federal to local) matching basis, with nonfederal funds, services, materials, or lands – fairly valued as determined by the secretary – or any combination thereof.

6. The trails to be interpreted cross and are administered by three different NPS regions; thus, a coordinated approach to planning was required. Other trail interpretive centers, existing and proposed, in the states around Iowa interpret the same trails and histories for their respective states. Some of these trail centers are being created under the authority of the National Trails System Act; others have no direct federal participation. The facilities at the Council Bluffs center should not duplicate other facilities in the region.

7. What facilities should be provided at the trails center had to be determined.

These issues were resolved in the draft plan.

GOALS

Based on discussions among the primary interest groups, the National Park Service, the state of Iowa, and the city of Council Bluffs, the following goals were identified for the trails center:

Interpretation – The foremost goal is the interpretation of the historic trails. This is an educational goal that must be compatible with other interpretive themes.

Orientation – The center should provide orientation to the area's natural and cultural resources, to the national historic trails and associated resources, and to local historic sites. Directions and orientation to city services and other facilities should be given informally through brochures, computers, and personal contacts.

Links to existing recreation facilities – When possible and feasible, the trails center should complement local recreation facilities, including all types of passive and active recreation – from local playgrounds to hiking, shopping, and eating. Connections between the recreation facilities and the trails center should be indirect, providing visual and sensory separation between facilities as befits their different purposes.

Economic development – Revenue generation, job creation, and spin-off industries are desirable side effects of the trails center development, but the center itself should be the catalyst for and not the source of this economic growth.

TRAILS CENTER LOCATION

The city of Council Bluffs has been selected as the location for the Western Historic Trails Center, and the South 24th Street site has been selected as the specific site for the trails center.

For further information about the existing natural environment (the soils, vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, water resources, etc.), the cultural environment (the historic background of the trails and the historic resources in the Council Bluffs area), the socioeconomic environment, and other major points of interpretation of the trails, please refer to appendix C.

The purpose of the trails center is to educate the visitor about the vital roles played by Council Bluffs, the state of Iowa, and the region in the westward expansion movement and the development of the United States.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is a process of education that is designed to stimulate curiosity and convey messages to the visiting public. Detailed recommendations for the interpretive program are described in the "Interpretive Plan" section. The recommendations are summarized below.

Information and Orientation

The center will provide basic travel information and orient visitors to theme-related resources in Iowa, in the general area, and throughout the West at a staffed information counter; information may also be provided through brochures, maps, exhibits, audio cassettes, or interactive computer terminals.

Interpretive Media

A variety of interpretive media will tell the stories outlined by the interpretive themes. A 20- to 25-minute film will tell the overall story of the trails and convey the emotion, scope, and human experience aspects of the story. Although an artifact collection will not be included in the trails center, exhibits will provide important information. With few available original artifacts, exhibits will depend heavily on such items as historic photos, paintings, and sketches, as well as views of significant sites. Wayside exhibits will be mounted along trails or on overlooks or decks where there is a view to interpret or highlight.

Prominent in the center will be a sales area that offers theme-related interpretive publications and other materials to visitors. The possibility of opening a branch of an existing association is also recommended; possibilities include the Eastern National park and Monument Association, the Oregon-California Trail Association, and the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Many publications related to the major interpretive themes already exist. However, a new brochure describing the center and introducing the significance of the trails is recommended.

Assistance will be offered at the information desk; however, depending on the operator and community support, there is the opportunity for enhancing services through additional programming that may include offsite programs, interpretive talks, heritage education, and living history.

Interpretive Themes

Overall Interpretive Theme. The Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, and Oregon-California Historic Trails were designated to commemorate explorations and migrations that influenced the scope and outlook of our nation.

Primary Themes. The story of westward expansion is fashioned from countless individual stories of bravery, deprivation, boredom, strength and weakness of character, heroism, cowardice, disease, accidents, survival, death, drama, and drudgery.

Exploration and migration on the trails brought Euro-Americans into the homelands of Indian tribes; contacts between the two cultures often had good intentions but poor results.

American westward movements in the 19th century included journeys (heading east and west) along a system of trails across the American continent by pioneers, explorers, religious groups, prospectors, and scientists.

The Lewis and Clark expedition represented one of the greatest organized explorations in American history; supplied invaluable information about geography, natural history, ethnography, and geology; opened the West to the fur trade; and galvanized the westward expansion.

Migrants traveled west from Council Bluffs to join the Oregon and California Trails; the 1849 gold rush in California was a major incentive; and land for settlement in Oregon, Colorado, Montana, and other areas attracted other settlers.

The Mormon Pioneer Trail commemorates a well-organized, disciplined, and community-based migration of a religious group fleeing persecution for their beliefs.

After the early 1850s more western migratory movement went through Council Bluffs than any other gateway.

There were a variety of land uses in the frontier West by American Indians, explorers, trappers, traders, hunters, miners, ranchers, farmers, laborers, missionaries, speculators, soldiers, artists, and tradesmen before the closing of the frontier in 1890.

Travel and relocation continue today for many of the same reasons as in the 19th century.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

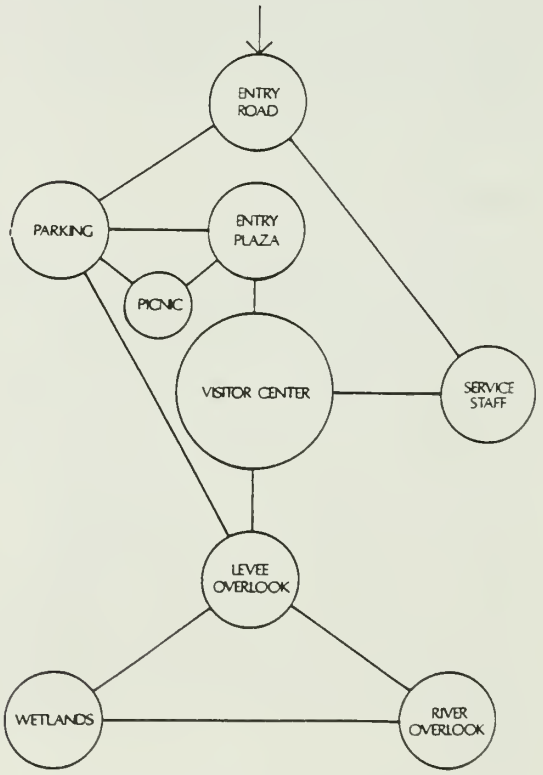
Based on the analysis of facilities needed and the projected annual visitation of 100,000 visitors, (see the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* for further detail) the following plan has been approved for the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs.

Site Design Concept

The trails center will stress interpretive goals and provide quality visitor facilities in a parklike atmosphere where visitors of all ages will enjoy and learn about western expansion. No food, lodging, or gasoline services will be planned at the site; these needs can be more compatibly fulfilled by existing merchants in surrounding development areas in the city. Primary areas and facilities will be designed to be accessible to visitors with disabilities, with appropriate grades and surfaces on the trails.

The schematic below shows site functional relationships for the center.

The South 24th Street site is predominantly open, flat, agricultural land. A flood control levee divides the site, the eastern two-thirds being agricultural lands and the western one-third wooded wetland and Riverside park development, with its sports fields, playground, picnic area, and small pond (see Site Analysis and Access and Overall Site Plan maps). Development at the site will



Site Functional Relationships

Site Analysis

Western Historic Trails Center

United States Department of the Interior
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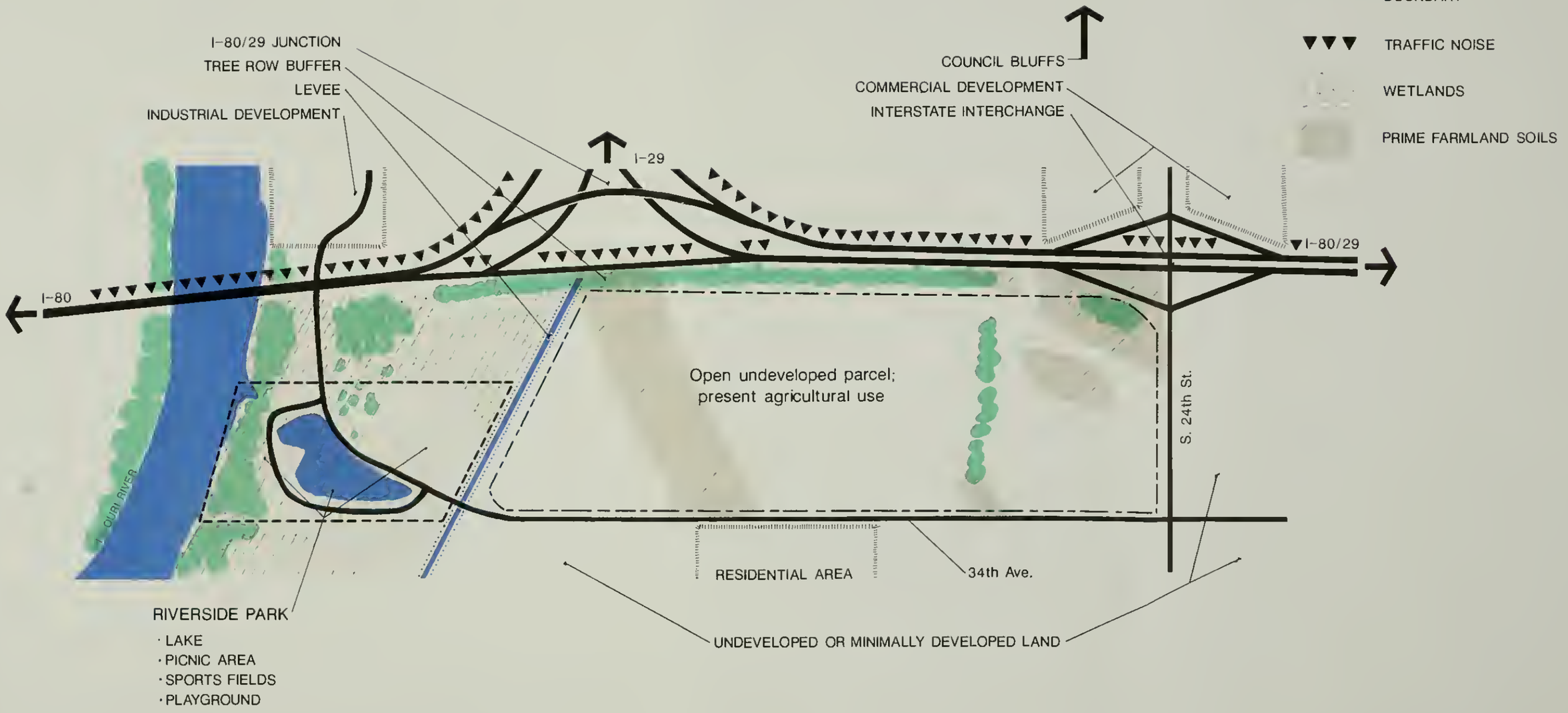

Site Analysis

Western Historic Trails Center

United States Department of the Interior
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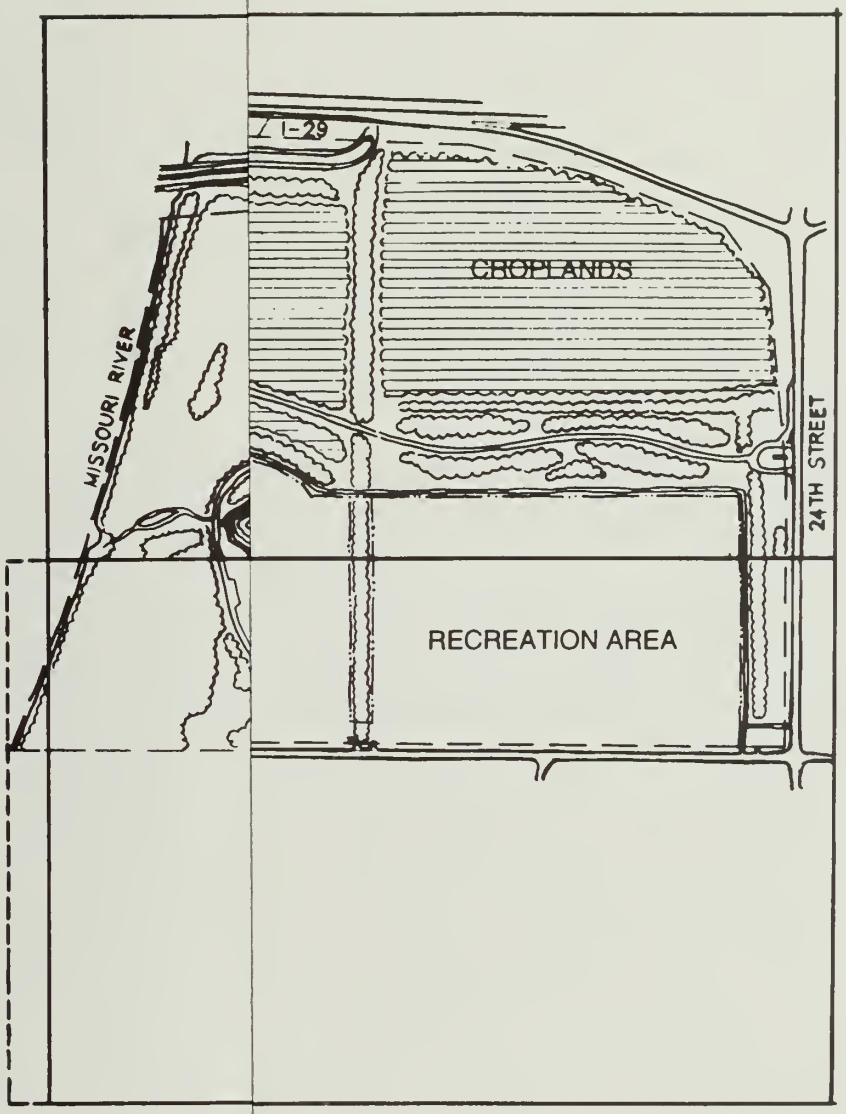

Access and Overall Site Plan

Western Historic Trails Center

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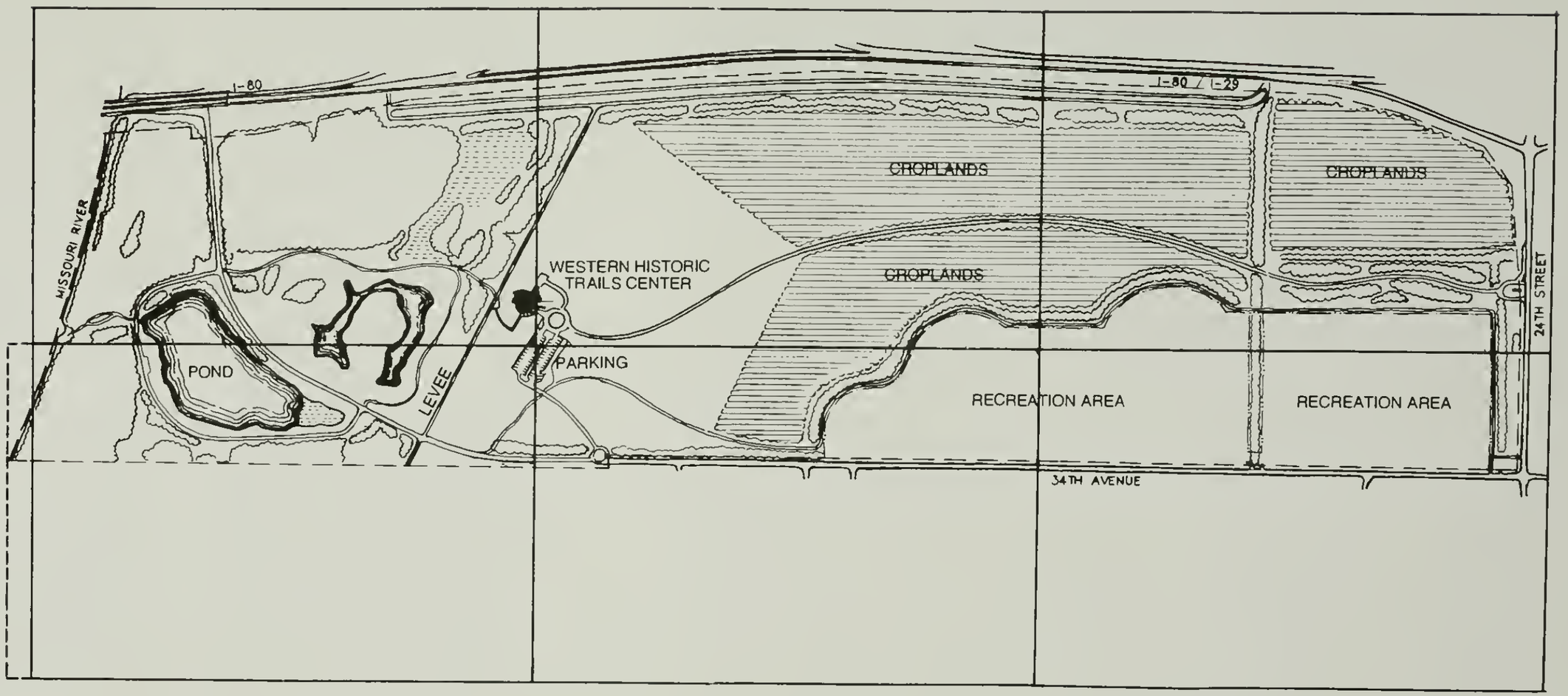

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Access and Overall Site Plan

Western Historic Trails Center

United States Department of the Interior · National Park Service
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include the trails center building; access, circulation, and parking development; and landscaping and site development. The 70-acre Riverside Park west of the levee will be incorporated into the trails center development. Existing sports fields and tennis courts, incompatible with the desired atmosphere for the trails center, will be relocated to the southeast corner of the site.

Highway signs on I-29/I-80 will mark the exit to the center at South 24th Street (see Access and Overall Site Plan). The trails center entrance road will be less than 1/4 mile from the interchange and will require an entrance sign at 24th Street.

To create an appropriate, uncluttered entrance through the eastern portion of the tract, open space and agricultural fields will be maintained to buffer the trails center from the interstate and South 24th Street. The entrance road will be a one-way parkway passing through the open space, 1 1/4 miles long with sweeping curves and gentle knolls. The subtle knolls and curves will provide progressively more detailed views of the center in the distance, allowing visitors a comfortable transition from interstate highway driving, and creating a dramatic sense of arrival. The open space adjacent to the parkway will be planted and maintained in agricultural fields and as native prairie. The edges of the site will be lined with berms and trees to screen the interstate, the athletic complex, and other adjacent land uses, and to muffle noise. Visitors can leave the site via 34th Avenue. The 34th Avenue route parallels the south edge of the site along the site of the city's proposed athletic complex.

A large, open, circular drive in front of the center will offer visitors a full view of the center, orientation to facilities, and easy access to parking and drop-off areas (see Site Detail map).

There will be an entrance terrace at the front of the building, with space for groups to gather and comfortable seating areas. A sculptured wall will be provided in this area.

Parking will be at the side of the building to maintain good approach views. Visitor parking will include 96 parking spaces, five (nearest the building) of which will be for visitors with disabilities, and 3 spaces for oversize vehicles for a total of 100 spaces.

A trail will connect the building to an overlook at the top of the levee where visitors can view the Missouri River bottomland. The trail will begin on the west side of the building, stop at a small platform atop the levee that provides a wayside exhibit, and proceed west to the river areas.

The existing road adjacent to the pond will be maintained for emergency vehicles and nonmotorized recreational use to enhance the pond's natural setting. The road surfaced to the north (under the interstate bridge) will be removed and through traffic, except for utility and emergency vehicles, will be discontinued.

The South 24th Street site totals 423 acres. Of that acreage, 7½ acres of levee would be deducted, leaving a trails center site of 416½ acres; 72 acres of the remaining site will be operated by the city of Council Bluffs as an athletic complex. The city must exercise quality design standards to control and maintain the visual quality of the athletic complex. Other land along the bordering roads is largely vacant, except for a residential development south of 34th Avenue.

City water is within 700 feet of the center at this site. Sanitary sewer service is within 1,000 feet, however, it is a force main and will require a sewage lift station. Natural gas and electric services are within 2,100 feet of the trails center.

Two overhead powerlines, one crossing the main parcel north of the residential area (over the proposed parkway) and another crossing Riverside Park to the comfort station, may be placed underground or relocated.

Grading and drainage will blend with existing topography. Roads and parking will be designed with surface drainage to the degree possible, minimizing subsurface

drainage structures. Only minimal stormwater will be collected and dispersed off site. Disposal into municipal stormwater sewers will be minimized.

Architectural Design Concept

The facility will be passive, catering to the educational goal of the facility; active recreation facilities will be limited to interpretive trails and overlooks that will enhance the visitor experience and tie the trails center to surrounding interest areas or trails.

To be successful, the center must meet the needs of both visitors and the operator. The structure design must integrate the site, administrative/operational, and building support functions with the desired visitor experience. Some typical building functions for this type of facility can be assumed. Assumptions about the functions and required square footage have been made based on visitor projections and comparable facilities and with the benefit of an operator's input.

The schematic on the following page depicts the functional relationships of the various areas of the building.

The approach to the design of the trails center has been to create a facility that will attract the interest and curiosity of travelers along the interstate highway. The building and site will work together to tell the story of westward expansion.

The building will be oriented along strong north-south axis. The entrance plazas, where large tour groups (such as school children) can gather before entering the facility, will mimic the building wall elements. A large sculptural wall will be placed at the front of the building as a focal point. Visitors will approach the entry vestibule at an angle, from the southeast. This angled approach will reduce the perceived mass of the structure and emphasize the axis and the east-west movement/orientation.

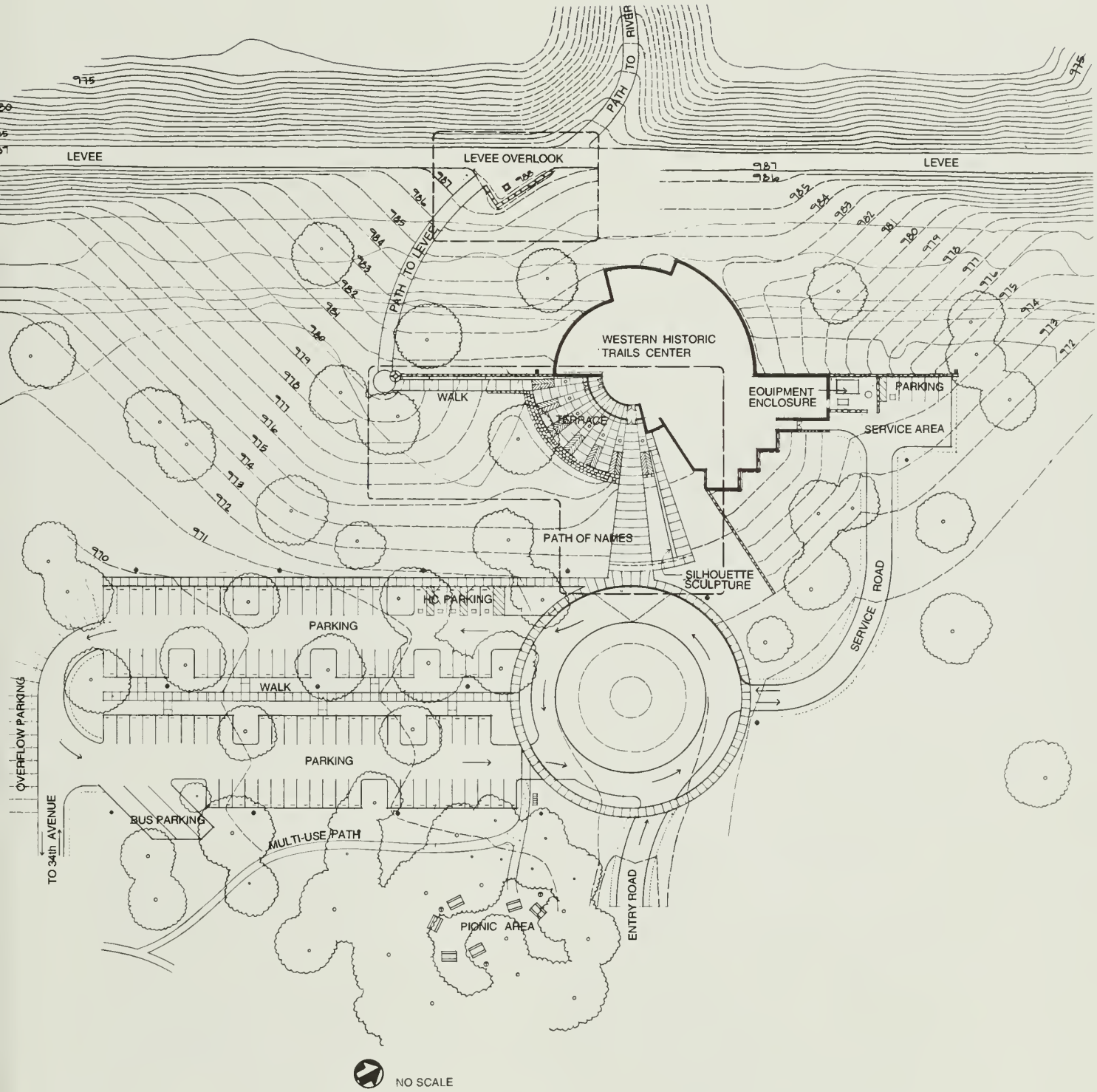
The building will have three functional areas: visitor services areas, administration and operations areas, and building support areas. The floor plan will separate the visitor services (public use) areas from the administrative, building support, and operational areas. All the areas will be arranged around a central core area where public and operational functions can compatibly overlap. These functions include the entry vestibule, main lobby, restrooms, contact counter, sales area, tourist information area, audiovisual, and primary exhibit area.

Floor Plan. Visitors will enter the center's glass vestibule. From the vestibule, they will enter a lobby from which they can access all public use areas, including the contact counter, sales area, tourist information area, restrooms, phones, drinking fountains, exhibit area, and auditorium. The main lobby and exhibit areas will be open floor spaces where visitors can easily move through the hanging and free-standing interpretive panels and display cases. The facility will be designed so that a minimum staff (two people) can operate the contact counter, sales area, and projection room. A work area will be provided at the contact counter for the attendant. The auditorium will seat 90 (approximately two busloads) and accommodate four wheelchairs. Visitors can obtain brochures, maps, pamphlets, and general information, use interactive computers, and plan their stay in the Council Bluffs area in the information area.

A small sales area will provide the opportunity to purchase trails-related educational and commemorative materials. Incidental orientation to the surrounding area will also be provided.

The administrative offices and other operational areas will be separate from the visitor areas. These areas will contain various offices, a work area, conference room, storage room, staff restrooms, and the mechanical room for the facility.

Building Materials. All building materials have been selected for durability, resistance to vandalism, and low maintenance without sacrificing visual quality.



Site Detail

Western Historic Trails Center

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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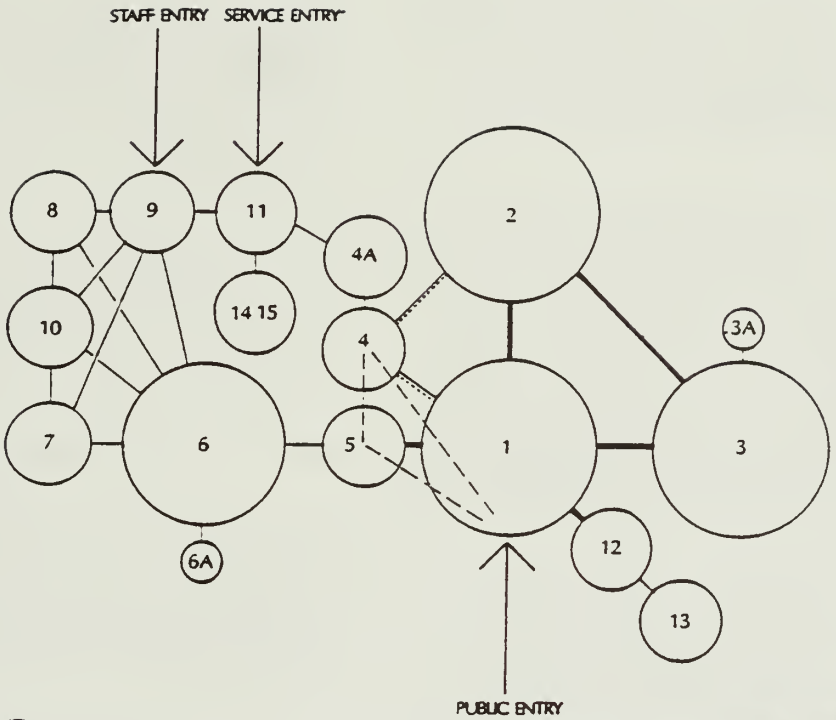


LEGEND

1. Entrance Lobby
2. Exhibit Area
3. Auditorium/Multi-Purpose Room
3A. Projection Room
4. Museum Shop
4A. Museum Shop Storage
5. Information Desk Area
6. Staff Work Area
6A. Office
7. Conference Room
8. Breakroom
9. Staff Entry
10. Staff Restrooms
11. Maintenance Area
12. Public Restrooms
13. Janitor's Room
14. Mechanical Room
15. Electrical Room

Primary Public Circulation

Secondary Public Circulation

Staff Circulation

Line of Sight

Building Functional Relationships

Maintenance. Maintenance of the facility is a major concern in both the design of the building and the selection of building materials. Materials susceptible to vandalism, such as wood, are not recommended for areas of visitor contact. More durable materials, such as stone and precast concrete, are suggested. These can be cleaned with solvents or lightly sandblasted if defaced. Intrusion and fire detection systems will be incorporated into the building design.

RESOURCE AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

No development will be done in wetland areas; development of trails west of the levee will avoid impacts to potential bald eagle habitat. Some existing uses of the wetland and river bottomland will be disallowed (dumping and offroad vehicle use); also, through-traffic routes will be closed (except to utility, maintenance, and emergency vehicles) and pavement removed. Construction actions (i.e., demolition of existing facilities) affecting designated wetlands have

required consultation and special compliance procedures. The 1972 Clean Water Act requires section 404 permits, administered by the Corps of Engineers, for any dredging, filling, or draining of wetlands.

Twenty-five acres of the prime farmland east of the levee will be maintained mostly in croplands, with a smaller portion planted and maintained with native prairie-like vegetation. Further study will determine the plant types appropriate to the various conditions on the site and the methods of planting and management. Once established, only periodic management of the prairie area will be needed to maintain its integrity from exotic plants or woody species.

Immediately adjacent to roads, parking areas, walks, and buildings will be landscaped and mowed more frequently. In the picnic area west of the parking area, pedestrian-tolerant lawn grasses will be established and maintained. The buffer areas of trees will consist of native species.

Topsoil will be conserved during construction and used in site landscaping.

LAND ACQUISITION

Property has been acquired for the trails center through donations or purchases with donated funds and exchanges. Federal funding for this facility can only be expended on a two-for-one matching basis with nonfederal funds, services, materials, or lands — or any combination thereof — fairly valued as determined by the secretary of the interior. The use of lands already owned by local government for construction of the trails center will minimize the amount of local cash expenditure and allow the local share to be leveraged to the best advantage of local funding interests.

The access and overall site plan shows the area to be acquired. The site is bounded on the west by the Missouri River, on the north by I-80, on the south by 34th Avenue, and on the east by South 24th Street. The parcel totals 423 acres and is composed of farmland east of the flood control levee, the Riverside Park west of the levee, and the industrial parcel west of the levee between the park and the I-80 right-of-way. Riverside Park is under city ownership, but the remaining land is privately owned. The Riverside Park parcel will apply toward the local matching share of the trails center development costs. The remaining land has been acquired through the methods outlined in the enabling legislation. This property will be donated to the trails center and will apply to the local share of the funding match.

TRAILS CENTER OPERATIONS

The trails center will be primarily a day use facility, with occasional evening programs. No employee housing will be provided. Onsite administrative facilities will be compatibly incorporated with the center and site development.

As stated in the legislation, the trails center is to be operated by a nonfederal entity. The legislation specifies the following authorities of the National Park Service:

- No major alteration of the facility or grounds may be done without the express written authorization of the secretary of the interior.
- The plan of operations for the center shall be approved by the Secretary.
- The Secretary shall have access to all documents relating to the operation and maintenance of the center.
- The Secretary shall have the right of access to the center.
- The United States shall be held harmless from all events arising from the operation and maintenance of the center.
- The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements to provide technical assistance to the center's operator.

Several potential operators were identified in the draft plan. The State Historical Society of Iowa has been identified as the operator of this facility.

STAFFING

Staffing levels necessary to operate the facility will be directly proportional to the operation hours and the days the facility is open. The trails center will operate seven days per week for 10 hours each day (8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.). Administrative support staff for the facility will be in addition to the onsite staff described in this plan.

Based on that schedule and the anticipated interpretive services to be provided, the following staffing level was determined. The staffing level may change when a final agreement is reached with an operator.

Staff duties at the facility will be handled cooperatively as the need arises. For the facility to be open for 70 hours each week, adequate staff will be required. The small staff will have collateral duties as well as their major job description, but no employee will be expected to exceed a normal 40-hour work week. For example, interpretive work will not be a full-time demand.

Similarly, interpreters can assist in display maintenance. Volunteers will probably also be available to assist in staffing the information desk and sales area, but they are not included in the estimate of facility staff. The sales area will be operated by concession, with three employees/sales clerks needed. All maintenance will be by contract or cooperative agreement.

OPERATING COSTS

Operating costs include salaries, maintenance, materials, equipment, and utilities. In general, salaries amount to 60% of total operations costs, and overhead expenses account for the remaining 40% Staff salary expense would be about $248,100 and overhead costs about $165,400. These figures do not include the costs of administrative support staff or additional program development. The total operating budget for the center would be about $413,500 per year. This compares realistically with the average operating costs of the comparable sites surveyed.

In addition to the operating costs, there may be initial capital investment costs for equipment and supplies. Agreements for contract or cooperative maintenance services (provided by partnership agencies) could reduce total maintenance costs. As a prudent measure, a contingency fund amount should also be budgeted for those larger expense items that cannot be handled by the normal maintenance staff (painting, damages, etc.).

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines steps and suggests a sequence for plan implementation.

1. **Commitment of an Operator.** The legislation initiating this project directs the following:

> Before undertaking the construction of the center, the Secretary shall enter into a binding agreement with a qualified non-Federal entity for conveyance by deed or lease from the Secretary any structure or property acquired and developed as provided for by this Act. Any such agreement shall provide that –
>
> (1) the non-Federal entity agrees to operate and maintain the center and make no major alteration of the structure or grounds without the express written authorization of the Secretary;
>
> (2) a plan of operations shall be submitted that is satisfactory to the Secretary;

(3) the Secretary shall have access to documents relating to the operation and maintenance of the center;

(4) the Secretary shall have the right of access to the center; and

(5) the United States shall be held harmless from all events arising from the operation and maintenance of the center.

This agreement is necessary before construction begins. It has been approved and signed by the National Park Service and the State Historical Society of Iowa.

2. **Matching Contributions.** These contributions are also governed by the legislation for this project, as follows:

(c) Implementation. – In order to implement the plan and design under subsection (b) of this section, the Secretary is authorized to acquire lands and interests in lands by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange, for the construction of the center authorized in subsection (a). Federal funds to carry out this section may only be expended on a two-for-one matching basis with non-Federal funds, services, materials, or lands, fairly valued as determined by the Secretary, or any combination thereof.

The final details of the match should also be approved and guaranteed before preparing the construction documents.

Some sources for local matching contributions include donation of land and improvement of 34th Avenue

3. **Land Acquisition.** The necessary land has been acquired by donations, purchases with donated or appropriated funds, and exchanges.

The scenery, though tame, is graceful and pleasing. Here are level plains too wide for the eye to measure; green undulations, like motionless swells of the ocean; abundance of streams, followed through all their windings by lines of woods and scattered groves. But let him be as enthusiastic as he may, he will find enough to damp his ardor. His wagons will stick in the mud; his horses will break loose; harness will give way; and axletrees prove unsound. His bed will be a soft one, consisting often of black mud of the richest consistency. As for food, he must content himself with biscuit and salt provisions; for, strange as it may seem, this tract of country produces very little game. As he advances, indeed, he will see, mouldering in the grass by his path, the vast antlers of the elk, and farther on the whitened skulls of the buffalo, once swarming over this now deserted region. Perhaps, like us, he may journey for a fortnight and see not so much as the hoof print of a deer; in the spring, not even a prairie hen is to be had.

Yet, to compensate him for this unlooked-for deficiency of game, he will find himself beset with "varmints" innumerable. The wolves will entertain him with a concert at night, and skulk around him by day, just beyond rifleshot; his horse will step into badger-holes; from every marsh and mud puddle will arise the bellowing, croaking and trilling of legions of frogs, infinitely various in color, shape, and dimensions. A profusion of snakes will glide away from under his horse's feet, or quietly visit him in his tent at night; while the pertinacious humming of unnumbered mosquitoes will banish sleep from his eyelids. When thirsty with a long ride in the scorching sun over some boundless reach of prairie, he comes at length to a pool of water, and alights to drink, he discovers a troop of young tadpoles sporting in the bottom of his cup. Add to this that all the morning, the sun beats upon him with a sultry, penetrating heat, and that, with provoking regularity, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, a thunderstorm rises and drenches him to the skin.

The Oregon Trail
Francis Parkman

Albert Bierdstadt, "The Oregon Trail," ca. 1865. *Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio.*

INTRODUCTION

There are few stories as central to the American experience as the settling of the West. The story is over 10,000 years old; chapters written in English, French, and Spanish span but a few hundred years. Within the last 200 years, travelers on four major trails brought about profound changes in the land, the plants and animals, and the people of the West. They are now designated as National Historic Trails: Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, and California (see National Trails System map in the "Introduction" section of the *Comprehensive Plan*). Their story is the domain of the Western Historic Trails Center.

The trails stories can be experienced in many ways, and it will be the purpose of the trails center to help visitors find interesting, accurate, and enjoyable ways to learn more about the trails and their consequences. Visitors will choose among exhibits, audio-visual programs, interactive computers, publications, lectures, informal conversations, and quiet contemplation. They will pause at the banks of the Missouri, hike through grassland and forested bottomland, and read wayside exhibits. Routes and ruts of original trails, and places such as Fort Atkinson (where Lewis and Clark first met with Plains Indians) and many other sites can be visited. Paintings, sketches, photographs, slides, films, and videos will encourage individuals to imagine their own scenarios.

The trails center will introduce the story of the four trails that carried travelers westward (and eastward) as well as the impacts on native cultures, the supporting communities and infrastructure, and the changes over time. Characters will include the famous and the ordinary; men, women, and children; those who travelled and those whose lands were invaded; heroes, villains, and regular folks. Only an introduction will be attempted; the center will not attempt to tell the whole story but will introduce important ideas, place them in meaningful contexts, and encourage visitors to travel to sites associated with the four trails.

PURPOSE OF PLAN

This interpretive plan defines and discusses visitor experience goals and parameters and recommends ways to achieve those goals through interpretive media, activities, and facilities. It is not intended as a detailed history or design document; rather, it represents an approximate consensus on the broad outlines of an interpretation and orientation program at the trails center.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Western Historic Trails Center will introduce and interpret the roles and impacts of the Lewis and Clark, Oregon-California, and Mormon Pioneer Trails, and the Council Bluffs/Omaha region in the development of American settlement and transportation patterns and will provide orientation to other attractions where these themes can be explored.

WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON, "APPROACHING CHIMNEY ROCK." *Scotts Bluff National Monument, National Park Service.*

HISTORY

The [California] trail was the route of the greatest mass migration in American history, and today the remnants of the trail are reminders of the sacrifices, struggles, and triumphs of early American travelers and settlers. This emigration contributed directly to the occupation, settlement, and development of the western part of the United States, from the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast.

Eligibility/Feasibility Study
California and Pony Express Trails
National Park Service

No one knows when the first humans stepped onto the North American continent; archeologists' estimates range from 10,000 to more than 30,000 years ago. The first Americans came across a frozen Bering Strait from Asia; how quickly and the routes by which they spread south is also poorly understood. But this is known: what we call "the West" was home to various groups of people for more than 10,000 years before a series of invasions brought cataclysmic changes.

The West's first inhabitants made their living through gathering, fishing, and hunting; later most groups added agriculture to their repertoire. Whether due to respectful world views, limited technologies, or low population densities, their overall impact on the land was light. The West looked pretty much like it would have without humans. Then came other humans.

One of the first known invasions brought several of the Lakota tribes, pushed from their eastern woodlands by the Chippewa and others in the 1700s. Their lives on the Great Plains were soon to be dramatically changed by the acquisition of horses from

the leaders of another great invasion — the Spanish, who drove north from present-day Mexico and the Mississippi Valley in the 1500s. Fur traders and trappers came from the east, north and west — some were independent entrepreneurs, and many were allied with or employed by the Russian American Company, the Northwest Company, the Hudson's Bay Company or the American Fur Company. Claims on the West were made by Spain, Mexico, Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. The indigenous inhabitants tried (usually unsuccessfully) to maintain their claims to lands that had been their homes for hundreds to thousands of years. Settling these claims took more than 300 years and countless lives.

The beginning of the 19th century saw a huge portion of the West transferred from French to American "ownership" with the Louisiana Purchase. Westward expansion was about to get serious. (The following section is a summary of the history portion of appendix C in the 1991 draft plan.)

As the culmination of President Thomas Jefferson's dream to learn the secrets of the land west of the Mississippi River, the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition of 1804–06 marched westward. Expedition orders required that Lewis and Clark follow the Missouri River to its source, seek a water route to the Pacific, and along the way record the soils, animals, plants, minerals, and geography. In the course of their travels, the Lewis and Clark party camped for several days just below and above present-day Council Bluffs, Iowa. Their meeting with Otoe and Missouri Indians on Missouri River bluffs, about 20 miles above present-day Omaha, led to the adoption of the name Council Bluffs for the area and eventual city in Iowa.

The first Euro-Americans traversing the Council Bluffs region left no permanent mark to note their passing. French and Spanish traded along the Platte River in the 1700s. Hearing news from Lewis and Clark that the Rocky Mountains were teeming with beavers, fur traders swarmed up the Missouri River and headed west. At the same time more government-sponsored explorers covered the region. The first crew to depart from the Missouri and follow the Platte River to the west in the Council Bluffs area was led by Major Stephen Long in 1820. With government authorization, Long investigated the Platte and South Platte routes into present-day Colorado. Fur traders traversed the North Platte and Platte rivers eastward to the Missouri in 1824. After 1830 the Platte became a favored route in the quest for furs, and the north side acquired the name 'Trappers' Trail."

Fur trading activity brought the trans-Mississippi area to the attention of missionaries in the early 1830s. In their zeal to save Indian souls, these men and their wives made the arduous journeys as far as Oregon. In 1835 Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker became the first missionaries to depart from Council Bluffs to establish an Oregon mission. The following year Whitman and Henry Spalding took their wives from the current Bellevue, Nebraska, site to Oregon. These were the first white women to make such a trip. Jesuit priests founded a mission to the Pottawattamies at the current site of Council Bluffs in 1838; the mission closed in 1841.

Despite the notoriety of fur trading and missionary endeavors, no mass westward migration began until the 1840s. In 1842 the first large emigrant party proceeded to Oregon. Favorable reports of fertile land and prosperous conditions in Oregon and depressed prices for farm products in the Mississippi Valley led many people on the overland Oregon trek beginning in 1843. These travelers, who pursued the course mainly from Independence, Missouri, diagonally across northeastern Kansas to the Platte River, dispelled the skeptics' doubts that loaded wagons could traverse the rough terrain of half a continent. Known as the Oregon Trail, pioneers traveled that route until more enticing distractions led them to California by 1849.

In the meantime, a persecuted religious group known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also called Mormons) sought peace in the isolated desert of

Dear Sir

Washington. U.S. of America. July 4. 1803.

In the journey which you are about to undertake for the discovery of the course and source of the Missisipi, and of the most convenient water communication from thence to the Pacific ocean, your party being small, it is to be expected that you will encounter considerable dangers from the Indian inhabitants. should you escape those dangers, and reach the Pacific ocean, you may find it imprudent to hazard a return the same way, and be forced to seek a passage round by sea, in such vessels as you may find on the Western coast. but you will be without money, without clothes & other necessaries; as a sufficient supply cannot be carried with you from hence. your resource in that case can only be in the credit of the US. for which purpose I hereby authorise you to draw on the Secretaries of State, of the Treasury, of War & of the Navy of the US. according as you may find your draughts will be most negociable, for the purpose of obtaining money or necessaries for yourself & your men. and I solemnly pledge the faith of the United States that these draughts shall be paid punctually at the date they are made payable. I also ask of the Consuls, agents, merchants & citizens of any nation with which we have intercourse or amity, to furnish you with those supplies which your necessities may call for, assuring them of honorable and prompt retribution. and our own Consuls in foreign parts where you may happen to be, are hereby instructed & required to be aiding & assisting to you in whatsoever may be necessary for procuring your return back to the United States. And to give more entire satisfaction & confidence to those who may be disposed to aid you I Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States of America, have written this letter of general credit for you with my own hand, and signed it with my name.

Th: Jefferson PRESIDENT

To Capt Meriwether Lewis

LETTER: THOMAS JEFFERSON TO MERIWETHER LEWIS, JULY 6, 1803. *Missouri Historical Society.*

present-day Utah. Hostility toward their religious and secular practices caused these people to be driven from New York to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois where their leader Joseph Smith was killed. It was at that point, under the guidance of Brigham Young, that the Mormons decided on a western course. Leaving Nauvoo, Illinois, they chose the Council Bluffs area as their first objective. The first group arrived on June 14, 1846, and established a camp near Mosquito Creek. To obtain money to sustain the trek, Brigham Young, through an eastern representative, persuaded President James K. Polk to recruit Mormon men for non-combat duty in the recently declared war with Mexico. With Young's aid, Captain James Allen enlisted about 520 persons, most from the camp near Mosquito Creek, for this Mormon battalion. Mustered on July 16, 1846, the recruits began their march to California four days later.

On July 1, 1846, Brigham Young began to move several thousand Latter-day Saints to the west side of the Missouri using a ferry. They established winter quarters in what is now the Florence area of north Omaha. As others straggled into the area, they settled with Henry Miller at the site that later became downtown Council Bluffs and called it Miller's Hollow. In 1848 Miller's Hollow became known as Kanesville in honor of Thomas Kane, a non-Mormon who had befriended the Latter-day Saints. Mormons in this settlement established dozens of stores and shops. A log tabernacle (75 feet x 100 feet) was erected near the corner of Harmony and Benton Streets. A Mormon newspaper, the Kanesville *Frontier Guardian*, began publication in January 1849.

Beginning in spring 1847 Brigham Young led the first of many wagon trains that left the Council Bluffs area for the West. The chosen route followed the north side of the Platte and North Platte Rivers to Fort Laramie, where they crossed the North Platte River and continued on to South Pass and Salt Lake City, Utah. In December, after his return to Kanesville, Young was confirmed as president of the church.

Through 1848 the Latter-day Saints traveling to Salt Lake from the Kanesville (Council Bluffs) area had the trail north of the Platte mostly to themselves. The discovery of gold

CAPTAINS LEWIS AND CLARK HOLDING A COUNCIL WITH THE INDIANS. *Library of Congress.*

Through 1848 the Latter-day Saints traveling to Salt Lake from the Kanesville (Council Bluffs) area had the trail north of the Platte mostly to themselves. The discovery of gold in California, however, brought thousands of non-Mormon emigrants to Kanesville starting in 1849. By 1852 more people began using Kanesville as the jumping-off point than any other single place — even the Nebraska City, Nebraska and St. Joseph and Kansas City, Missouri, areas. The Mormons who trekked to Salt Lake had become a distinct minority among the travelers. By the mid 1850s, the number of western emigrants began to decline despite the Mormon handcart groups that passed through Council Bluffs between 1856 and 1860.

The Pike's Peak gold discovery in Colorado revived Council Bluffs in 1858, and the revival lasted into the 1860s because of further finds in Montana and Idaho. Only the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 brought quiet to Council Bluffs. Historian Merrill J. Mattes has estimated that one-third of all those to follow the Platte River westward moved through Council Bluffs and traversed the north side of the river.

Westward expansion continued into the 20th century, although trains, buses, airplanes, and automobiles replaced the prairie schooner. Fights over land and water waxed and waned. Indians were relocated to reservations or "mainstreamed" into western society. Populations of states such as California and Arizona exploded. The West also became a vacation destination, and streams of station wagons headed out on summer vacations over interstate highways that often followed old trail routes. Many of those travelers will stop in a few years at the Western Historic Trails Center.

MORMON EMIGRANTS AT SOUTH PASS. *Western History Research Center, University of Wyoming.*

FORT LARAMIE IN 1849 — a key stopover on the Oregon and California Trails. *Library of Congress.*

THE SETTING

No matter whether they dreamed of farms, fish, or gold, the overland emigrants all passed through at least one of those communities situated along the banks of the Missouri River, which served either as outfitting post or jumping-off point, or, as usually was the case, both. With permanent residence in the Far West in mind, the pre- and post-gold rush overlanders naturally attempted to carry along many of their earthly possessions. Since the vast majority were farmers, they usually already had on hand one or more serviceable wagons and several draft animals, as well as sufficient foodstuffs and other supplies. For many such emigrants it would have been unnecessary to pass through the outfitting towns had they not needed to cross the Missouri River or been desirous of reaching the Oregon-California Trail over a known approach route. The availability of ferryboats and the advertisements about the shortest and most-traveled approaches to the main overland trail therefore channeled these overlanders to the several towns which served as their jumping-off points into what they usually called the "wilderness."

By the early 1850s the overwhelming preponderance of overlanders were launching out onto the plains from the Council Bluffs area.

The Plains Across
John D. Unruh, Jr.

WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON, "KANESVILLE — MISSOURI RIVER CROSSING — 1856." *Scotts Bluff National Monument, National Park Service.*

Location and Natural Resources

The trails center will be near South 24th Street, just south of Interstates 80 and 29, in Council Bluffs, which is on the western border of Iowa. The site contains 355 acres, its western edge abuts the Missouri River, and it sits just off Interstate 80 near the intersection with Interstate 29 (see Region map at the beginning of this document). Council Bluffs is part of the Omaha/ Council Bluffs metropolitan statistical area, and had a 1990 preliminary census population of 53,883; the 1990 figure for Omaha was 332,739.

The site is divided by a flood control levee. East of the levee is agricultural land; west of the levee is floodplain woodland, shrub forest, wetlands, and a city park (Riverside Park). The center will be east of the levee; trails will give visitors access to the western portion of the site and the Missouri River.

Three federally listed threatened or endangered species may occur in the general area of Council Bluffs. The bald eagle and least tern are endangered; the piping plover is listed as threatened. Bald eagles often use Lake Manawa, 1 mile southeast of the South 24th Street site, for a winter roosting and feeding site. Peak use occurs during February and March. 81 individuals were observed near the lake during this period in 1990. Least terns and piping plovers nest and breed on sand bars and fly ash disposal sites. Their number is unknown, and there are no known nesting or breeding sites at or near the 24th Street site. No other federally proposed or candidate species are know to exist at the site. (This section and the following "Local Historic Resources" section were adapted from appendix C of the 1991 draft plan.)

Local Historic Resources

The essential resources for this project are the stories of the trails. Physical resources, sites, and artifacts to tell those stories range in all directions from the trails center. While the domain of the story reaches to the Pacific Ocean, and eastward at least back to Washington, D.C., (and probably back to Europe), this section describes some of the local sites. Visitors will be oriented in the center to sites further afield.

Lewis and Clark Expedition Sites. Despite the significance of Council Bluffs in the settlement of the West, no specific remains mark the passing of any group. General sites, however, abound. Three campsites from the Lewis and Clark expedition can be roughly located in the area.

Camp White Catfish — The men of the Lewis and Clark expedition camped on the Iowa riverbank just below present-day Lake Manawa State Park. At this location, the party lingered from day's end on July 22 until the morning of July 27. On their return from the Pacific Ocean, the Lewis and Clark party also spent the night of September 8, 1806, at the same place.

Camp Near Eppley Field — The evening of July 27, 1804, the group camped on the what is now the Nebraska shore in a thicket of small trees.

Camp above the Interstate 680 Bridge — After traveling 10 3/4 miles, the party camped on the Iowa side, approximately 2 miles above the where the Interstate 680 bridge now stands.

Mormon Settlement Sites — Several sites in the Council Bluffs area are associated with the occupation by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who abandoned Nauvoo, Illinois, and began their quest for a western home in 1846. The site of present-day Council Bluffs became their first objective. The Mormons used several trails across Iowa as they traveled west.

First Mormon Settlement, Mormon Battalion Site, and Mormon March Route — The first group of Mormons to come to the area established camp near Mosquito Creek. Many members of the Mormon battalion were recruited from this camp to fight in the Mexican War. The battalion also began its trek to California

from this site, heading south along the face of the bluffs east of the Missouri River.

Kanesville, Mormon Ferry Site, and Tabernacle Site — While many of the first occupants moved to the Nebraska side of the river by way of a ferry located at the present-day Highway 275 bridge site, other Mormons developed a village in what later became downtown Council Bluffs. Residing there until 1853, they named their settlement Kanesville. In Kanesville, on a site near the corner of Harmony and Benton Streets, they built their first tabernacle. In that structure (which no longer exists), Brigham Young was confirmed as church president on December 24, 1847.

Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters Sites and Graveyard — The Mormons found the opposite side of the Missouri River attractive as well. After receiving permission from the Omaha Indians, Brigham Young began to move people across the river in July 1846. In the area of what is now north Omaha (known as Florence), two settlements were established. The first of these was Cutler's Park. Succeeding people founded the adjacent Winter Quarters settlement, which soon outgrew Cutler's Park. By the end of September 1846, Winter Quarters was a town with 820 surveyed lots; before Christmas that year the town had a population of approximately 3,500 and contained 700 log homes.

Living conditions at Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters proved difficult, especially during the first winter. People were buried in a cemetery that was common to both settlements. Between mid-September 1846 and May 1848, 359 Mormons were interred in that cemetery. The Latter-day Saints Church has established a visitor center at this graveyard.

In late 1847 federal Indian agents became concerned because the inhabitants of Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters were stripping the countryside of timber and game. In their view such a circumstance caused a hardship for the Omaha Indians. As a result, the Mormons abandoned these towns in May 1848 and moved east of the river to the Kanesville area.

Site of Brigham Young's Home and Winter Quarters Council House — At the time Brigham Young directed Mormon migrants to quarters on the west side of the Missouri River in 1846, he also chose to reside in that area. His home in the 1846 to 1848 period was just north of the Winter Quarters settlement. A council house, which served as a civic center and local church headquarters, was adjacent to Young's home.

Mormon Crossing — In 1846, at the point where present-day Interstate 680 crosses the Missouri River, the Mormons established a ferry to facilitate their westward movement to Salt Lake on what has been designated as the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. The ferry remained in operation into 1853 when a call was made to area Mormon residents to relocate to Utah.

Although the Oregon Trail was identified as an interpretive subject in the legislation authorizing the trails center, the main branch did not pass through Iowa. Those who traveled to Oregon in the 1843–48 period generally traversed a route from Independence, Missouri, diagonally across northeastern Kansas to the Platte River at Fort Kearney, Nebraska. Some missionaries, such as Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker, passed through the Council Bluffs area on their way to Oregon in the mid 1830s.

Beginning in 1849, numerous people sought to move west using the passage through Council Bluffs and generally following the north side of the Platte and North Platte rivers. Some of these people did go to Oregon, but until the mid 1850s the overwhelming majority had California as their destination. In recognition of this movement, this route has been designated as the California National Historic Trail.

Although the California Trail had several points of origin, the Council Bluffs branch came to be the most favored route. By 1858

most people moving west from Council Bluffs were heading to Colorado. In the 1860s the primary destination changed to the gold fields of Montana and Idaho.

Other Sites — Several Council Bluffs sites are associated with the general non-Mormon westward movement of the 1849–66 period. These include an area used by wagon parties while they awaited ferry transport across the Missouri River.

Non-Mormon Wagon Staging Area — This area, between Council Bluffs and the river, was described as filled with little villages of tents, generally arranged in circles with the white covered wagons near each circle. In addition, herds of mules, horses, and oxen occupied the area.

Non-Mormon Ferry Site — The other location involved the ferry established to move the non-Mormon travelers across the river. In the area that now holds the Interstate 480 bridge, the ferry location varied, the exact location dictated each year by shifting sandbars. By 1852 more people gathered in the Council Bluffs area yearly than at any other single assembly point for western migration.

COUNCIL BLUFFS IN 1854. *Council Bluffs Public Library.*

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made during the drafting of the interpretive plan.

The state of Iowa will provide the funds for the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) to be the owner-operator of the center.

As a visitor center serving interstate travelers, the center will promote tourism to the entire Council Bluffs-Omaha area.

The primary customers will be interstate travelers.

Most visitors will have little information on western trails.

The center will be designed to optimize educational and enjoyment values for visitors.

The center will be open seven days each week.

The trails center will not be a repository for historical artifacts or documents.

Exhibits will include no original artifacts or documents and will be self-interpretin g and low maintenance.

The center will be designed to be operated with no more than five FTEs or work years of onsite employment and with no permanent increase in Des Moines staff.

American Indians will be involved in the development of the interpretation program.

Maintenance and support services may be contracted.

The entire site will be transferred from the National Park Service to the State Historic Society of Iowa upon completion of planning, design, and construction.

The State Historic Society of Iowa has the authority to collect and retain fees.

The center will incorporate principles of sustainable design.

The city of Council Bluffs and the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce will provide promotional and other assistance.

THE AUDIENCE

This center, which will be used in various ways, will attract an array of visitors. Major groups will include:

interstate travelers
adult tour groups
local and regional tourists
children
school groups
visitors with disabilities
history enthusiasts
international travelers

These groups overlap and are not listed in priority order. They represent people with different interests, backgrounds, needs, attention spans, and learning styles. Some general and tentative suggestions may be made for these various groups.

Interstate Travelers

Visitors will pull off Interstate 80 after seeing the sign. Most will seek access to a restroom. They may have read about the center in a travel guide or in the feature section of their local newspaper, or they may not have heard of it before they saw the sign. Some may have to get to Topeka, Ottumwa, or St. Louis that night and would not have much time. Others may have more time and might head west to Scotts Bluff or east on the Mormon Trail after their visit to the trails center.

Adult Tour Groups

This is a fast-growing segment of the tourist population. Tour buses may deliver a large group of visitors all at once. Some groups will have tight time schedules. Many tour takers are retirees and physical difficulties may be common. Levels of interest, knowledge, and previous experience are often quite high, especially if the tour bus contains history enthusiasts. Some tour buses may show videotapes related to the center's interpretive themes while traveling to the site.

Local and Regional Tourists

These visitors will come from Des Moines, Kansas City, Omaha, or Council Bluffs. They will often be quite knowledgeable about areas of local history. They will spend the day or perhaps the weekend. There is a growing group of tourists who take shorter trips closer to home, and they may have time to spend at the center. They will comprise the bulk of the "destination visitors" whose trips are primarily for visiting the center.

Children

Children will usually come to the center with their families or in organized groups from schools (discussed below), scouts, or church. Some may not know much about the subjects interpreted, some may be too young to have mastered conceptual thinking, and some may have a limited attention span. In designing exhibits and programs, consideration should be given to their smaller size. Some may want to touch nearly everything. Some are capable of having significant experiences that can kindle lifelong interests.

School Groups

School programs will be an important — but not the most important — aspect of the operations at the center. The Council Bluffs/Omaha metropolitan area is likely to provide enough requests for school programs to fill the center's likely capacity. Schools frequently like to fill a bus (from 45 to 60 people) on field trips; once in the center, students might be divided into groups of 10 to 30. The subjects interpreted at the center correspond to major parts of state history curricula.

Visitors with Disabilities

All visitor and staff areas will be accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Through the use of various sensory modalities in interpretive media, those with sensory impairments will have access to essential information and interpretation.

History Enthusiasts

They may be interested in history, western history, Iowa history, Oregon Trail history, Plains Indian history, Mormon history, women's history, or Lewis and Clark. They will already be well informed about their area of interest. In addition to new information, they may be seeking new approaches to interpretation (such as new films) or new experiences (tracing ancestors' journeys) and real places (following the California Trail to the coast). These visitors are likely to buy books and pamphlets on relevant topics.

International Travelers

The story of the American West plays on an international stage. Foreigners may have even more trouble than Americans in distinguishing between American history and American myth. International tourism is increasing, including organized groups. Most

foreign tourists may speak serviceable English but would appreciate and benefit from materials in their first language. Many of these will be implemented as the need is documented.

Visitor Projections

The comprehensive plan estimated an annual visitation of 100,000 after five years of operation. The heaviest visitation will probably be in summer. Fall and spring will follow close behind, with the most school group visits. The primarily indoor nature of the experience here would allow the center to become a winter destination for schools and regional visitors, especially if new media or programs are presented periodically.

Opportunities to observe winter wildlife (especially bald eagles) along the Missouri River will attract regional visitors to the center in winter.

MEDIA AND PROGRAM GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Goals

Provide opportunities to learn about the people who traveled the trails and the impact of those travels, including the effects on American Indians. Include information on the evolution of transportation and settlement patterns.

Coordinate promotion of local and national attractions serving similar missions.

Encourage overnight visits to the greater Council Bluffs-Omaha area.

Visitor Experience Goals

Based on the purpose and significance statements, the visitor experience goals describe the opportunities to be provided for visitors to enjoy, appreciate, learn, and benefit from their visit to the trails center. These goals describe what will be achieved through facilities, media, and activities.

Visitors to the trails center will have opportunities to

enjoy their visit — whether they are young, old, disabled, foreign, have different learning styles, or otherwise vary from the "average" visitor

learn the information described in the interpretive themes

comprehend and appreciate the drama, emotional impact, and scope of the story of westward expansion — including the stories of travelers, American Indians, and those in the gateway communities (especially Kanesville and Council Bluffs)

find out more about relevant areas of interest, including visits to trails and historic sites and sources of further information

discover connections between historical accounts of the westward movement and visitors' own experiences — which will include their travels, family histories, and the history and mythology they have previously learned

empathize with the personal stories associated with the westward movement

increase their interest in landscapes and their awareness of 19th century perspectives of western landscapes

Young visitors to the trails center will have opportunities to

enjoy their visit; find information and experiences designed to appeal to their age, interest level, and learning style, and interact with other members of their group (family, school class, friends) without disrupting other visitors

Interpretive Themes

The interpretive themes are the key ideas or stories that will be introduced and interpreted at the trails center.

Overall Theme. The Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer and Oregon-California historic trails were designated to commemorate explorations and migrations that influenced the scope and outlook of the nation.

Primary Themes. The story of westward expansion is fashioned from countless individual stories of bravery, deprivation, boredom, strength and weakness of character, heroism, cowardice, disease, accidents, survival, death, drama, and drudgery. Motivations for risking the perilous journey west were as varied as the pioneers themselves; many were motivated by the lures of rich farmland, gold, opportunity, adventure, a better life, and freedom from religious persecution. The perspectives of the children, women, and men who traversed the trail or who saw these newcomers enter their homelands are needed to tell the whole story.

Exploration and migration on the trails brought Euro-Americans into the homelands of American Indian tribes. Contacts between the two cultures often had good intentions but poor results. The end of many traditional Indian lifeways was hastened by the new arrivals. For example, most Indians valued the trade goods brought by the newcomers, but the Indian trade led also to the abandonment of traditional technologies and increasing dependence on the dominant culture. The overland trails disrupted and diminished the surrounding environment, especially animals such as bison, thereby threatening the self-sufficiency of American Indians on the Great Plains. Smallpox and other epidemics often accompanied the new arrivals and exacerbated the difficulties wrought by competition over land, resources, and cultural differences. Efforts to honor and learn about Indians were made by President Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and others. Efforts to create Indian territories in the West often started with good intentions but suffered from accommodation, political patronage, ineptitude, economic difficulties, betrayal, and warfare; most tribes were eventually removed to marginal lands.

American westward movements in the 19th century included journeys (heading east and west) along a system of trails across the American continent by pioneers, explorers, religious groups, prospectors, scientists, and soldiers.

The Lewis and Clark expedition represented one of the greatest organized explorations in American history. It supplied invaluable information about geography, natural history, ethnography, and geology, opened the West to the fur trade, and encouraged westward expansion. It also established a strong diplomatic claim by the United States for the Pacific Northwest.

Migrants traveled west from Council Bluffs to join the Oregon and California trails. The 1849 gold rush in California was a major incentive. Land for settlement in Oregon, Colorado, Montana, and other areas attracted other settlers.

The Mormon Pioneer Trail commemorates a well-organized, disciplined, and community-based migration of a religious group fleeing persecution for their beliefs.

After the early 1850s more western migratory movement went through Council Bluffs than any other "gateway." Migrants depended on the provisions, equipment, information, and temporary shelter supplied by the gateway communities. Gateway communities such as Council Bluffs and Bellevue played important roles in the success of the migration and were significantly affected by their participation in the westward movement.

There were a variety of land uses in the frontier West by American Indians,

explorers, trappers, traders, hunters, miners, ranchers, farmers, laborers, missionaries, speculators, soldiers, artists, and tradesmen before the closing of the frontier in 1890. These activities brought about sweeping environmental and cultural changes.

Travel and relocation continue today for many of the same reasons as in the 19th Century. Geography and historic use patterns often dictated where trails developed; modern roads, railroads, and air routes often follow historic trail routes for similar reasons. Visitors to the trails center may recognize interests and aspirations common with 19th century travelers.

Subthemes. Within the overall and primary themes there are several subthemes that could be addressed at the trails center.

Westward expansion reflected national policy and the popular conviction that expansion to the Pacific was the American Manifest Destiny. Negotiations and conflicts with other countries (Britain, Spain, France, Mexico) were factors in shaping boundaries. Thomas Jefferson commissioned the Lewis and Clark expedition, a product of his visions of a more direct trade route to the Pacific, American sovereignty extending across the continent, economic expansion, and scientific inquiry.

The Lewis and Clark expedition was notable for its technological sophistication, organization, discipline, and a cultural sensitivity that was advanced for the times.

The observations of Lewis and Clark, as well as later scientists, naturalists, and artists, brought great advances in knowledge of natural and cultural history in a land physically different from the earlier frontiers east of the Mississippi.

Western emigrants experienced a variety of cross-cultural contacts, especially with American Indian, French-Canadian, Mexican, and British people.

Transportation technology (wagons, boats, animals, handcarts, and railroads) affected and were affected by the westward movement.

Knowledge of the West changed with exploration, cartography, surveying, geographical and geological knowledge, the development of roads and transportation networks, artistic and literary works, and changing means of communication.

In 1846 the Mormon battalion formed in Council Bluffs to serve in the Mexican War. The battalion marched from Council Bluffs via Fort Leavenworth to present-day California.

American westward movements in the 19th century were important cultural events in shaping the postrevolutionary history and imagination of the United States.

F.O.C. DARLEY, "EMIGRANTS CROSSING THE PLAINS," shows the romantic view of life on the trail. *North Wind Picture Archives.*

EMIGRANT FAMILY ON THE TRAIL. *Denver Public Library, Western History Department.*

Emigrant fears of possible Indian treachery prompted most of the demands for governmental protection and resulted in the onset of punitive expeditions, trailside forts, and army patrols along the South Pass route. These developments, coupled with the legacy of the emigrant passage, probably rendered irrepressible the western Indian wars following the Civil War. The attitudes of blatant superiority exhibited by so many overlanders, together with their reckless actions as they crisscrossed the continent — ignoring Indian claims to tolls or bridge fees, shooting at Indians on sight, nonselective retaliation — occasioned corresponding Indian responses. These widening circles of suspicion and hostility were similarly influenced by the national publicity given to the anti-Indian attitudes held by many overlanders. The prejudices thereby fostered and/or popularized were important in the development of attitudes countenancing excesses against certain or even all Indian tribes.

The Plains Across
John D. Unruh, Jr.

AN EMIGRANT TRAIN ATTACKED BY HOSTILE INDIANS ON THE PRAIRIE. *Library of Congress.*

In '49 the emigrants brought the cholera up the Platte Valley, and from the emigrant trains it spread to the Indian camps. "Cramps" the Indians called it, and they died of it by the hundreds. On the Platte whole camps could be seen deserted with the tepees full of dead bodies, men, women and children.

George Bent
Southern Cheyenne

"DEATH SCENE ON THE PLAINS." Disease, in this case probably cholera, was a much greater threat to migrants than hostile Indians, *Bancroft Library.*

WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON, "CALIFORNIA CROSSING." Fording the South Platte near present-day Julesburg, Colorado, 1866.

Interpretive Media and Facilities

Exhibits and audiovisual media will provide most of the interpretation at the center, although there will also be opportunities for personal services. A major effort will be made to include views and accounts of significant sites, both at the present time and at the time of their historic significance. Interpretation will enhance orientation and encourage visits to other related sites.

Arrival

Visitors will arrive directly from traveling on an interstate highway; some acclimation and scene setting might be accomplished before they enter the building.

At an early point the overall themes of the four trails should be introduced, perhaps with a large sign visible from arriving cars that identifies the center, the four trails that are interpreted, and the operator.

The site includes a large field running east-west; this could serve as a metaphor for travel across the plains should the center be located at the western end of the field (next to the levee). Maintaining the field (now planted in corn) as a grassland might be accomplished through mowing and/or prescribed burns (with extensive volunteer assistance). Some screening of the highway with trees is desirable — not to deny the existence of the modern world and the interstate as successor to the trails but to help visitors shift focus to their experience at the trails center.

As visitors walk up to the center they can read a wayside exhibit introducing the significance of the four trails, Council Bluffs, and the westward migration in general.

There also might be one or more pieces of outdoor sculpture or theme-related pieces such as a wagon or Mormon handcart. Since these are likely to be climbed on and will be exposed to the weather, they would be reproduction items and would be described in a brief text.

A map on the outside wall of the center could provide overall geographic orientation, showing the general relationships of the trails to current roads and towns. Another wayside panel could emphasize the attractions located along the trails and provide a place for after-hours orientation (with a small brochure rack). A bulletin case would allow posting current materials.

Trails Center

Visitor areas within the trail center would include the lobby, exhibit area, video alcove, auditorium, and bookstore.

The approximate sizes of these areas are

Lobby	1,350 sf (includes information center)
Exhibits	3,700 sf
Auditorium	930 sf (include projection center)
Bookstore	1,210 sf (includes office and storage)

The center will be designed to be operated by one person at the information desk. This would require (among other things) optimum visibility of visitor use areas from the desk, possible video surveillance of areas such as the auditorium, and an office contiguous to the information desk (so the information attendant can answer telephones and perform other tasks when no visitors are in the immediate area).

Lobby. The overall theme of the trails center should be apparent to visitors when they enter the building; this could be ensured by the use of text, graphics, artifacts and/or sculptural elements, complementing and adding to the information and perspectives gained on the approach to the center. They should also be able to locate the various areas of the building, know what is available outside on the grounds, know where to find out about other attractions and services, and know where to get further information. The information desk should be immediately visible.

Information and Orientation. The orientation function is threefold: orientation to the building, orientation to theme-related attractions along and near the trails, and information on travel directions, lodging, food, and recreational activities. Orientation to other theme-related sites would be available in the lobby as well as throughout the other interpretive media areas. Orientation to travel and visitor services would take place in the lobby.

The lobby orientation area would provide basic travel information and orient visitors to theme-related resources in Iowa, in the area, and along the trails. It could include a brochure rack, maps, exhibits, and interactive computer terminals. Visitors would be able to obtain the information they need in a variety of ways. It should be located near the information counter, so questions can be answered and more detailed information provided by the desk attendant.

It is important that theme-related orientation be user friendly and presented in a format that answers basic questions. One possible approach would organize information according to the distance from the center — these sites can be visited in a one-day trip, these sites in two days, etc. Information about the sites should be presented in attractive formats, including visuals, to encourage people to visit.

Exhibits

The exhibit area will introduce thematic areas, convey historical flavor and mood,

relate individual stories and perspectives, display some reproduction artifacts and documents, and show important sites as they appeared historically and as they are today. Original artifacts or documents will not be exhibited or stored. There are not many original artifacts available, and reproductions often would not be cost-effective. An artifact repository will not be included as part of the trails center. Reproduction objects will be labelled to distinguish them from originals. Several reproduction items should be available for multisensory experiences. Important classes of items include those associated with daily life on the trail, periodicals, journals, letters, maps, sketches, tools, and cartographic instruments. A keelboat, wagon, or a Mormon handcart could be highlights; should safety and resource protection allow, they could be climbed on. Except for temporary exhibits, displayed historic documents should be reproductions.

Without original artifacts, exhibits will depend heavily on graphic materials and text, including copies of historic photos, paintings, and sketches, as well as modern views of significant sites. Text should include quotations from users of the trails, and those quoted should be from various age groups and perspectives. Text should also explain the graphics, describe objects, highlight the interpretive themes, and introduce topics such as outfitting for the trek, the changing faces of Kanesville-Council Bluffs, navigation on the Missouri, the rivers that guided the trails, pioneer demographics, food on the trail, communication, contact with American Indians, the organization of wagon trains, and building the railroads. The text will be limited in length and will not attempt to tell entire narrative stories. Visitors will be able to understand and enjoy the text by either reading fully or merely scanning. The design will ensure that the text is readable by all age groups and by people with slightly impaired vision.

Where possible and appropriate, visitors would be given suggestions on how to find further information and experiences. Sites that can be visited today could be pictured and described, and publications that explore topics in greater depth could be displayed in the corresponding exhibit area.

The exhibit room may be divided into separate spaces for each of the trails to introduce the overall story of westward expansion. The California and Oregon trails could be interpreted in the same space because they shared the same route over most of their length. The Lewis and Clark Trail may need special treatment since it is a different type of trail. The amount of space for each trail will vary.

The exhibit space will accommodate organized groups of roughly 20–30 people so that groups can view exhibits and hear talks without bothering or being distracted by other visitors. This might involve the use of physical baffles and alcoves.

Multisensory experiences will be available, including auditory and tactile. Background audio could be used to broadcast conversations and ambient sounds that might have been heard historically. Theme-related items will be available for handling.

Introductory Video. A 10- to 20-minute introductory video would tell the overall story of the trails and convey the emotion, scope, and human experience aspects of the story.

This video would

- provide the basic information and context needed to understand and appreciate the rest of the stories in the center
- help visitors distinguish among the four trails, comprehend the time periods, picture the geography, and understand the perspectives of the people involved in the westward movement

convey an interesting and emotionally compelling story

help motivate visitors to visit other sites, seek more information, and support historical preservation and interpretation

With the use of widely available historic photos, sketches, paintings, and diaries, the video could follow the then/now motif (showing significant historic and present-day sites) that would underlie many media treatments. Therefore, the video could have a major role in encouraging visits to historically significant sites and in helping visitors imagine original appearances, experiences, and events. Care would have to be taken not to dilute the impact or produce a product that would soon become obsolete.

The particular treatment should be one that appeals to a varied audience, that conveys experience as well as information, and that helps viewers identify with the players in these great stories. A living history approach is an obvious temptation. Actors in dusty buckskins trudging alongside replica prairie schooners would be an example. If very well done, this can be a powerful and effective approach, but it is difficult and expensive to do well. When poorly done, living history can appear silly and amateurish. The positive result could be accomplished more through suggestion, with a powerful audio component to help bring the past to life for viewers, provide emotional impact, and convey human experience. Sounds associated with navigating the Missouri, getting supplies in Kanesville, or fixing a broken wheel on the trail could help visitors imagine human experiences associated with the trails. Visuals could include historic photographs; activities and events could seem to be just out of camera range. The precise treatment of the video will be developed later.

Auditorium. This will be designed as a theater, with good acoustics, mostly sloping floor, and fixed seating for about 50 people. A projection booth is needed. Controls for sound and lighting should be available on at the front and in the projection booth. Some flexible stage lighting is recommended, with the capability of spotlighting a lectern at the side of the screen and various spot and flood lighting treatments of the front.

The auditorium will have features to serve people with disabilities, including spaces throughout the theater for wheelchairs, captions displayed directly below the screen, sound enhancement through portable earphones, and audio description through portable earphones.

Video projection now provides an image comparable with that of 16mm film and is cheaper and easier to operate. It is the recommended medium for the introductory audiovisual piece.

Other Audiovisual Products. Other topics would lend themselves to interpretation through audiovisual media: the geopolitical story of westward expansion (treaties, international relations, etc.), the impacts of westward migration on native societies, individual perspectives taken from diaries and oral histories, a short history of each trail, and the evolution from trails to interstates are examples of topics that could be interpreted with short videotapes and/or interactive computers.

These special topics could be shown at video monitors scattered throughout the exhibit area and lobby, and they could be shown at a special video alcove near the exhibit area. This alcove would have seating for 20-40 people and would allow the operator to show commercially-available programs that relate to center themes without disrupting the introductory program in the auditorium.

Care should be taken to minimize sound pollution (using baffles, sound-absorbent

materials, and directional speakers). Seating should be available.

Wayside Exhibits. Outdoor exhibits could be mounted wherever there is a significant view to interpret or highlight along on-site trails or on plazas or decks.

Possible examples include the following:

On the sidewalk approaching the center, a brief description should be provided regarding the identification of the four trails, the National Trails Act, and the purpose of the center.

Near the beginning of the trail on the west side of the levee, a three-panel wayside could compare the environment today with how this area would have looked in the 1850s. One panel could discuss the 19th century environment, the other could introduce the present landscape and its residents. Mention could be made of endangered species. The third panel should address safety concerns, especially the danger of high water.

At the place on the trail where the Missouri River is first seen, there could be a kiosk with three waysides, which could interpret the role of the Missouri in the Lewis and Clark exploration, including nearby campsites and perhaps a quotation describing an experience in that vicinity; the significance of the Missouri River in western travel, Indian life, the Great Plains environment, exploration, migration and commerce; and where and how migrants would have crossed the river, and what the riverfront area looked like in the 1850s.

At a point where there is a view of Council Bluffs, a wayside could picture the town of 140 years ago, and describe the activities and environment of this gateway community.

If the eastern portion of the site is restored as a grassland, there would be a need for at least one two-panel wayside identifying this as a reminder of the 19th century prairie, and discussing the revegetation work.

Publications/Sales. Prominent in the center will be a sales area that offers interpretive publications and other materials to visitors. All items will be theme-related; low-quality souvenirs will be avoided. In NPS facilities, this service is offered by nonprofit cooperating associations; the same arrangement is recommended here. The possibility of opening a branch of an existing association is also recommended.

Many publications dealing with the major themes already exist. However, a new brochure describing the center and introducing the significance of the trails is recommended.

Another recommended publication is a trail folder to supplement the natural and cultural history interpretation provided by the waysides along the trail. This could be available at a modest cost. It would take the same approach as the waysides — interpreting the present environment and comparing it to what was here in the 1850s.

Personal Services. The primary personal service to be offered at the center would be assistance at the information desk. However, depending on the operator and community support, other services could be offered. The two with the most potential are heritage education and living history.

Heritage education programs work with organized groups to increase awareness of our national legacy. There could be a demand for such programs among schools, scout groups, community organizations, nursing homes, and other groups in the Council Bluffs/Omaha area. Heritage education programs could be offered on and offsite by volunteer staff. Developing traveling trunks of educational materials and

guides for loan to teachers would enhance the staff's ability to provide outreach services. Programs could take place in the exhibit area, auditorium, and outdoors. A collection of reproduction items associated with trail activities could be incorporated into lesson plans for both on and offsite programs. Activities should fit into existing curricula. Pre- and post-visit activities would increase the value of the trail center program.

A volunteer interpreter in period costume could also be very effective in a living history demonstration portraying historical characters, real or fictitious. There are a few problems with living history. It is relatively costly, frequently inaccurate, and can be more entertaining than educational. Yet if done properly, there are few better ways to help visitors appreciate and empathize with the human experience of times past and to remember the information presented.

The center operator does not currently have the resources to offer living history, costumed interpretation, or other dramatic methods of interpreting history. However, these resources could become available in the future, most likely through volunteer participation. If living history programs were ever presented, they would be an addendum to the major interpretive effort and would require qualified supervision of volunteers. Third-person characterizations (or costumed interpretation) would be preferred due to lower cost, greater flexibility, less stringent requirements for dramatic skills, greater access to modern perspectives, and less confusion for visitors. It could be presented as a separate outdoor activity near the center. A likely focus for a living history program would be the daily life of travelers on the expedition. Staff and volunteers would exercise strict control over accuracy in costume, accoutrements, and story. People in period costume would not portray historical personages unless well trained and the visitors well prepared for the dramatizations. Living history would be used to present the interpretive themes only if all involved staff participate in a rigorous training program.

Outdoor Activities. After driving a long distance, visitors would find the grounds about the center attractive for many activities, including

walking dogs, stretching, lying in the sun, tossing a frisbee, getting the blood flowing after hours in the car

hiking the trail(s) west of the levee and seeing the Missouri River up close

picnicking

reading wayside exhibits

attending interpretive programs or special events

The area west of the levee would provide an opportunity for recreational hiking and a rough facsimile of historic Missouri River bottomland. Trails would allow visitors relief from hours in a car, and give them an opportunity to experience the river, which is just about the only tangible resource left that relates to the trails. Waysides (previously described) would enhance visitor enjoyment of this area.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The National Park Service has consulted and coordinated the preparation of this document with the following agencies and organizations:

City of Council Bluffs, Iowa
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Department of Transportation
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
Oregon-California Trails Association
Otoe and Missouri Tribes (Oklahoma)
Pottawattamie County, Iowa, Zoning and Planning
Sac and Fox Tribes of Missouri
State Historical Society of Iowa
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Denver, CO
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Office, Twin Cities, Minnesota
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

APPENDIXES

PUBLIC LAW 101-191 [S. 338]; November 29, 1989

TRAILS INTERPRETATION CENTER, COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

An Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide for the development of a trails interpretation center in the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) the nineteenth century American westward movement was an important cultural event in shaping the postcolonial history of the United States;

(2) the nineteenth century American westward movement consisted of journeys along a system of trails across the American continent by pioneers, explorers, religious groups, and scientists; and

(3) additional recognition and interpretation is appropriate in light of the national scope of the nineteenth century American westward movement.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to recognize the system of western trails established in furtherance of the National Trails System Act because of their national historic and cultural significance; and

(2) to provide the public with an interpretive facility devoted to the vital role of the western trails in the development of the United States.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAILS INTERPRETATION CENTER.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—In furtherance of the purposes of section 7(c) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1246(c)), the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to provide for a trails interpretation center (hereinafter referred to as the "center") in the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for the purpose of interpreting the history of development and use in the State of Iowa and the adjacent region of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and the Oregon National Historic Trail.

(b) PLAN AND DESIGN.—(1) Within 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, after consultation with the Governor of Iowa and in cooperation with such other public, municipal, and private entities as may be necessary and appropriate, shall complete a plan and design for the center, including the following:

(A) a detailed description of the design of the facility;

(B) a description of the site;

(C) the method of acquisition;

(D) the estimated cost of acquisition, construction, operation and maintenance; and

(E) the manner and extent to which non-Federal entities shall participate in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of the center.

(2) In the development of the plan and design for the center the Secretary shall take into consideration the report and plans prepared by The Western Historic Trails, Inc., and shall provide an opportunity for public comment.

(3) Upon completion, the Secretary shall submit the plan to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—In order to implement the plan and design under subsection (b) of this section, the Secretary is authorized to acquire lands and interests in lands by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange, for the construction of the center authorized in subsection (a). Federal funds to carry out this section may only be expended on a two-for-one matching basis with non-Federal funds, services, materials, or lands, fairly valued as determined by the Secretary, or any combination thereof.

(d) AGREEMENT FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF CENTER.—Before undertaking the construction of the center, the Secretary shall enter into a binding agreement with a qualified non-Federal entity for conveyance by deed or lease from the Secretary of any structure or property acquired and developed as provided for by this Act. Any such agreement shall provide that—

(1) the non-Federal entity agree to operate and maintain the center and make no major alteration of the structure or grounds without the express written authorization of the Secretary;

(2) a plan of operations shall be submitted that is satisfactory to the Secretary;

(3) the Secretary shall have access to documents relating to the operation and maintenance of the center;

(4) the Secretary shall have the right of access to the center; and

(5) the United States shall be held harmless from all events arising from the operation and maintenance of the center.

(e) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Iowa, the city of Council Bluffs, and other public or private entities to provide technical assistance with respect to the center.

(f) SATISFACTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION RESTRICTIONS.—Any restrictions, covenants, reversions, limitations, or any other conditions imposed by the Economic Development Administration relating to or affecting the use, transfer, or other

disposition of any land which is conveyed to the Secretary for the purpose of developing the center under this section shall be extinguished upon the acceptance of such donation by the Secretary.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated not more than $8,400,000 to carry out this Act.

Approved November 29, 1989.

APPENDIX B: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The National Park Service prepared a *Comprehensive Plan/Environmental Assessment* and distributed it for public review in 1991. That document, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzed the impacts that would result from the proposed federal action of developing facilities and interpreting a site in recognition of the Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails. The environmental assessment analyzed two alternatives for acquisition, site facilities, operations and interpretation, and included a no-action alternative.

The *Final Comprehensive Plan for the Western Historic Trails Center* has been prepared and distributed to the public. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is attached to this document. The FONSI is a decision document for the National Park Service, which affirms the course of action to be followed.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Six sites in Council Bluffs underwent site-selection analysis. Analysis of these sites led to the rejection of four sites and detailed consideration of two sites: Fairmount Park and Riverside Park as well as a no-action alternative.

Fairmount Park, alternative A, is on a bluff overlooking Council Bluffs and the Missouri River. It is a rugged, mostly forested area. Access is via a 5-minute drive from the I-80 interstate. The proposed development would require about 42 acres. Development would include a trails interpretive center building, parking area, access roads, support facilities, trails, exhibits, landscaping, and site development. Existing municipal park facilities would need to be relocated or removed. Trails would lead to viewpoints, giving panoramic views of the Missouri River, several historic trail sites, the interstate highway system, and the cities of Council Bluffs and Omaha. Estimated development costs, excluding land acquisition, would be $6.5 million. Land acquisition could be through donation, purchase, or exchange.

Riverside Park, alternative B, includes Riverside Park and a large agricultural field adjacent to 24th Street. This site is very accessible because it is adjacent to I-80 and I-29, with a major entrance and exit at 24th Street. A flood-control levee bisects the site, with Riverside Park occupying the floodplain area west of the levee and a flat, open agricultural field occupying the site east of the levee. The site covers 423 acres. Development would include a trails interpretive center building, parking area, access roads, staff parking, trails, overlooks and exhibits, picnic area, and landscaping and site development. Trails would lead over the levee to overlooks and to the banks of the Missouri River. There are no extant historic resources. However, the historic wagon staging site for the non-Mormons is located nearby. The trail center building and parking area would be located on the protected side of the levee, along with additional fill material. Estimated development costs, including land acquisition, would be $12 million. Land acquisition could be through donation, purchase, or exchange.

Under alternative B, the trails interpretive center, parking area, and picnic area would be located to the east of the levee. This area is considered protected from 500-year flood, according to the Corps of Engineers and the National Flood Insurance Rate maps. Development sites would avoid wetlands. An entry road with landscaped roadway corridor and entryway would extend from 24th Street. Approximately two-thirds of the 234 acres of farmland would remain in cultivated cropland use. Approximately 37 acres would be maintained in native prairie grassland, surrounding the trails interpretive center.

Under alternative B, in the final plan much of the development that was proposed in the 1991 plan west of the levee and within the floodplain has been reduced. The roads would be converted to trails, and there would be viewing points on the levee and on the Missouri River bank. The existing recreational fields and facilities in Riverside Park would be relocated to the southeast corner of the site.

Under alternative C (no action), there would be no trails center development at Council Bluffs. There would be no land acquisition and no change in existing land use patterns. There would be no educational or interpretive facility for national historic trails.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The *Comprehensive Plan/Environmental Assessment* was distributed to interested publics and a public comment period extended from May 1 to June 14, 1991. Public meetings were held in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on May 29, 1991, and in Des Moines, Iowa, on June 4, 1991. Open house/information meetings were held in Council Bluffs on May 29 and 30, 1991. The overwhelming majority of the comments received endorsed the South 24th Street/Riverside Park site. At the public meetings, many comments were received relating to historical information. Various organizations commented on their ability to operate the center. Only the State Historical Society of Iowa indicated an interest in operating the site.

PROPOSED ACTION

The 1991 *Comprehensive Plan* has been revised and updated. In consideration of the public comments on the *Comprehensive Plan*, which showed a majority preference for the South 24th Street/Riverside Park site, the National Park Service reanalyzed the sites. The attached *Final Comprehensive Plan for the Western Historic Trails Center* provides details for development of the South 24th Street/Riverside Park site. The federal government will not purchase or manage the land. However, the Park Service will own the land in fee simple during the construction phase. Prior to construction, a binding agreement will be entered into which conveys by deed or trust the property and structures to the State Historical Society of Iowa, who will operate and maintain the site.

FINDING

Compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470, as amended) has been completed for the proposed actin. The project area was surveyed and no significant historic or archeological resources were discovered.

It has been determined in consultation wit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed threatened or endangered species. This satisfies the requirements of the Endangered species Act, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been consulted regarding protection of wetlands, floodplain effects, and the construction of the trail center and placement of additional fill materials against the east side of the levee.

Development of the South 24th Street/Riverside Park site, which is described in the attached *Final Comprehensive Plan for the Western Historic Trails Center*, is selected for the following reasons:

1. There would be no significant impact to natural resources, including prime farmlands, as evaluated under the Farmland Protection Policy Act; wetlands or floodplains, as evaluated under Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, and Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands; and threatened or endangered plant or animal species, evaluated in accordance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

2. There are no cultural resources on the site, so there would be no impact to sites listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

3. No highly uncertain or controversial effects, unique or uncertain risks, significant cumulative impacts, or elements of precedence have been identified.

4. There would be beneficial use of the environment, and beneficial effect on urban quality and the built environment, without degradation, resulting in benefit to public health and safety.

5. There would be no violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law or ordinance.

After thorough review and consideration of the information contained in the environmental assessment and the public comments, I find that the alternative of developing the South 24th Street/Riverside Park site for the Western Historic Trails Center does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in 40CFR 1508.27. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for this federal action.

William W. Schenk — 5/30/95

Regional Director, Midwest Region — Date

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The city of Council Bluffs, on the western edge of Iowa along the eastern bank of the Missouri River, has been selected as the site for the Western Historic Trails Center. In addition, the South 24th Street site has been selected as the specific site for the trails center. Council Bluffs is in the eastern portion of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and has a 1990 preliminary census population of 53,883 people. This population amounts to about 8.8% of the total MSA population of 614,198. By contrast, Omaha has a 1990 preliminary census population of 332,739, six times larger than Council Bluffs and nearly 54% of the four-county MSA.

Council Bluffs sits with half of its development in the levee-protected river bottom and half amid and atop the 250- to 300-foot bluffs east of the river. From those bluffs, the views to the west across Omaha and Nebraska span river-banks and bluffs, urban development, and the Nebraska countryside. Views eastward are shortened due to rolling terrain and tree cover. The city is well served by state and federal highways and Interstates 29 and 80 (I-29 and I-80) intersect in the southwest corner and wrap around the east, west, and south sides of the city. Council Bluffs also has well-developed railroad and river barge transit facilities. Air carrier services are provided at Eppley Airfield in Omaha.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Topography

The Council Bluffs, Iowa, area is composed of a wide variety of landforms, including the Missouri River floodplain area (960 feet above mean sea level [MSL]) and adjoining rolling uplands (1,350 feet above MSL), a change of approximately 390 feet. The bluffs are deposits of fine, wind-borne, glacial-era soil called loess. Geomorphologists claim that these bluffs are the best representation of this geological phenomenon in the world. This unique structure makes the bluffs an uncommon resource and visitor attraction.

The South 24th Street site (including Riverside Park) is on 355 acres of flat agricultural and floodplain land. The agricultural land is separated from the floodplain of Riverside Park by a man-made flood control levee (986 feet MSL). The site elevation ranges from 975 to 980 feet MSL.

Soils

The Council Bluffs area is an alluvium depository consisting primarily of sand and gravel with interbedded silt and clay.

Soils at the South 24th Street site on the river (west) side of the levee are loamy fine sand and silty clays. Soils on the east side of the levee are silty clays and silt loams. All of these soil types are found in areas of recent deposition on bottomlands of 0-2% slope. The soils are occasionally to frequently flooded on the river (west) side of the levee. The loamy fine sand is excessively drained and exhibits rapid permeability, slow runoff, and low available water capacity. This soil type is poorly suited for agricultural crops and grasses. Building development restrictions for small commercial buildings are severe due to flooding. The flooding creates only moderate restrictions for road construction.

The silty clays are poorly to somewhat poorly drained. Soil permeability is very slow, and runoff is slow. These soils have a seasonally high water table. Drainage is needed to reduce wetness and provide good aeration. Building development restrictions for small commercial buildings and roads are severe due to flooding, wetness, low load-bearing strength, and shrink-swell potential of the soil.

The silt loams are well drained to somewhat excessively drained and exhibit slow to rapid permeability, slow runoff, and low to high available water capacity. Construction restrictions are severe for small commercial buildings

and local roads and streets due to flooding, low load-bearing strength, frost action, and shrink-swell capacity.

Prime and Unique Farmland

Four prime farmland soils are on the east side of the levee and occupy approximately 80 acres of the South 24th Street site according to the *Soil Survey of Pottawattamie County, Iowa* (Soil Conservation Service 1989). The prime soil types are Onawa silty clay, Haynie silt loam, Modale silt loam, and Grable silt loam (see Site Analysis map in "The Plan" section).

Vegetation

Vegetation at the South 24th Street site is divided by the levee into the floodplain woodland, shrub forest, and scattered wetlands to the west (Riverside Park) and the agricultural cropland to the east. The cropland is about 75% of the total site area. Shrubs and trees, primarily willow, make up the shrub forest areas. The floodplain woodlands are often wet or intermittently water covered and exhibit various stages of vegetational succession due to these changing water levels. Predominant species of the woodland are cottonwood, willow, and sedges with associated understory species of dogwood, sumac, wild grape, and poison ivy. The scattered wetlands consist of emergent, herbaceous, perennial hydrophytes (e.g., cattails, bulrushes, and sedges).

Wildlife

Specific information on wildlife species at the South 24th Street site is currently unknown. Wildlife diversity and abundance depends largely on the quality and quantity of available habitat. Woodlands usually offer habitat for songbirds (e.g., thrushes and woodpeckers), upland game birds (e.g., wild turkeys, ruffed grouse, and woodcocks), and mammals (e.g., red and gray squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, gray fox, and white-tailed deer). Wetland areas usually attract waterfowl, shorebirds, mink, muskrat, and beaver. Agricultural cropland supports common songbird species (e.g., meadowlarks and field sparrows), upland game birds (e.g., bobwhite quail and pheasants), and mammals (e.g., cottontails and red fox). It is assumed that some of these species are present at the site.

The general vicinity of the site is within the Central Flyway waterfowl migration route. The spring migration of waterfowl, primarily blue and snow geese, along the Missouri River is considered a wildlife highlight.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Three federally listed species may occur in the general area of Council Bluffs. Endangered species include the bald eagle and least tern; the piping plover is listed as threatened. Bald eagles often use Lake Manawa, 1 mile southeast of the South 24th Street site, for a winter roosting and feeding site. Peak use occurs during February and March; approximately 81 individuals were observed near the lake during this period in 1990. The eagles also use the Missouri River as a food source in early spring when the ice cover recedes. Rough fish species (such as carp and suckers), ducks, and geese make up the eagles' food base at these sites. Least terns and piping plovers nest and breed on sand bars and fly ash disposal sites. Their abundance is unknown, and there are no known nesting or breeding sites at the 24th Street site. No other federally proposed or candidate species are found at the site.

The woodland vole, a state-listed threatened species, is known to occur in undisturbed upland forested sites in the general area; no sightings at the South 24th Street site have been recorded.

Floodplains

The Council Bluffs levee separates Riverside Park from the remaining area of the South 24th Street site. This levee was constructed along the Missouri River by the Corps of Engineers between mile segments 619.5 and 614.0 and provides flood protection in excess of a 500-year flood event. The top elevation of the levee

is 986.0 feet MSL (see Site Analysis in "The Plan" section of this document). Riverside Park lies entirely within the 10-, 50-, 100-, and 500-year floodplains. At Missouri River mile 614 (Riverside Park), the elevations of the various flood intervals are: 975 feet MSL at 10-year, 979.7 feet MSL at 50-year, 981.0 feet MSL at 100-year, and 984.2 feet MSL at 500-year. Flooding can occur during any month, but there are two main flood periods— in March and April when the plains snowpack melts and in June.

Wetlands

Based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory maps, nine wetland types have been identified within the South 24th Street site. Together, these wetlands comprise about 20% of the entire area, and they are predominantly west of the flood control levee. The primary wetland types are: palustrine forested broad-leaved deciduous (48%), palustrine emergent scrub-shrub broad-leaved deciduous (32%), palustrine unconsolidated bottom (the pond) (15%), and palustrine emergent (5%). (See Site Analysis map for location of these wetlands.)

Any construction actions affecting designated wetlands will require consultation and special compliance procedures. The 1972 Clean Water Act requires section 404 permits, administered by the Corps of Engineers, for any dredging, filling, or draining of wetlands.

Water Resources and Quality

The Missouri River flows adjacent to the South 24th Street site, and a small recreational pond (described above under wetlands) lies within that site.

Water quality in the Missouri River often fails to meet state standards for full-body contact recreation. High levels of fecal coliform bacteria represent the primary water quality problem (U.S. Corps of Engineers 1980). Sediments and agricultural chemicals, including pesticides, are the primary agricultural pollutants.

Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources currently operates three particulate monitors and two lead monitors at Council Bluffs. Attainment or nonattainment of the air quality standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency is currently listed as unclassifiable. Readings thus far show no violations of the standards.

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Historic Background of the Trails

Although legislation specifies Council Bluffs as the site in Iowa to commemorate the Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, and Oregon trails, the area witnessed the divergent history of the American West with its crescendo of human activity. This increasing human movement continued from the 1804-06 Lewis and Clark expedition through the railroad era of the later 19th century.

As the culmination of President Thomas Jefferson's dream to learn the secrets of the land west of the Mississippi River, the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition of 1804-06 served as the first wedge in the march westward. Expedition orders required that Lewis and Clark follow the Missouri River to its source, seek a water route to the Pacific, and along the way record in duplicate the soils, animals, plants, minerals, and geography. In the course of their travels, the Lewis and Clark party camped for several days just below and above present-day Council Bluffs, Iowa. Their meeting with Otoe and Missouri Indians on Missouri River bluffs, some 20 miles above present-day Omaha, led to the adoption of the name Council Bluffs for the area and later city in Iowa.

The initial groups traversing the Council Bluffs region left no permanent mark to note their passing. Harkening to Lewis and Clark's news that the Rocky Mountains was teeming with beavers, fur traders swarmed up the Missouri River to go on west. At the same time more government-sponsored exploring parties

covered the region. The first crew to depart from the Missouri and follow along the Platte River to the west in the Council Bluffs area was led by Major Stephen Long in 1820. With government authorization, Long investigated the Platte and South Platte routes into present-day Colorado. Fur traders of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were the first to traverse the North Platte and Platte Rivers eastward to the Missouri in 1824. After 1830 the Platte became a favored route in the quest for furs, and the north side acquired the name "Trappers' Trail."

Fur-trading activity brought the trans-Mississippi area to the attention of missionaries in the early 1830s. In their zeal to save Indian souls, these men and their wives made the arduous journeys as far as Oregon. In 1835 Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker became the first missionaries to depart from present-day Council Bluffs to establish an Oregon mission. The following year Whitman and Henry Spalding accompanied their wives from the current Bellevue, Nebraska, site to Oregon. They became the first white women to make such a trip. Missionary fervor was not limited to Protestants. The Jesuit, Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, arrived at the current site of Council Bluffs in 1838 to found a mission to the Pottawattamies. Several months after DeSmet was assigned to the northwest in 1841, the mission closed.

Despite the notoriety of fur trading and missionary endeavors, no mass westward migration began until the 1840s. In 1842 the first large emigrant party proceeded to Oregon. Favorable reports of fertile land and prosperous conditions in Oregon and depressed prices for farm products in the Mississippi Valley led many people on the overland Oregon trek beginning in 1843. These travelers, who pursued the course mainly from Independence, Missouri, diagonally across northeastern Kansas to the Platte River, dispelled the skeptics' doubts that loaded wagons could traverse the rough terrain of half a continent. Known as the Oregon Trail, pioneers traveled that route until more enticing distractions led them to California by 1849.

In the meantime, a persecuted religious group known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also called Mormons) sought their peace in the isolated desert of present-day Utah. Meeting hostility for their religious and secular practices, these people were driven from New York to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois where their leader Joseph Smith was killed. It was at that point, under the guidance of Brigham Young, that the Mormons decided on a western course. Leaving Nauvoo, Illinois, these people chose the area of present-day Council Bluffs as their first objective. The first group arrived on June 14, 1846, and established a camp near Mosquito Creek. To obtain money to sustain the trek, Brigham Young, through an eastern representative, persuaded President James K. Polk to recruit Mormon men for the recently declared war with Mexico. With Young's aid, Captain James Allen enlisted about 520 persons, most from the camp near Mosquito Creek, for this Mormon battalion. Mustered on July 16, 1846, the recruits began their march to California four days later.

On July 1, 1846, Brigham Young began to move several thousand Saints to the west side of the Missouri using a newly built ferry. These people established winter quarters in what is now the Florence area of north Omaha. As others straggled to the area, they settled with Henry Miller at the site of later downtown Council Bluffs and called it Miller's Hollow. In 1848, Miller's Hollow became known as Kanesville in honor of Thomas Kane, a non-Mormon who had befriended the Saints. Mormons in this settlement established several stores and shops. A one-and-a-half story log tabernacle (75 x 100 feet) was erected near the corner of Harmony and Benton Streets. A Mormon newspaper, the Kanesville *Frontier Guardian*, began publication in January 1849.

Beginning in spring 1847, Brigham Young led the first of many wagon trains that left the Council Bluffs area for the West. Upon arrival in the Great Salt Lake valley, these people found their Zion. The chosen route followed the north side of the Platte and North Platte Rivers to Fort Laramie, where they crossed the North Platte River and continued on to South Pass and Salt Lake City, Utah. In December, after his return to Kanesville, Young was

confirmed as president of the church in the log tabernacle.

Through 1848 the Latter-day Saints traveling to Salt Lake from the Kanesville (Council Bluffs) area had the trail north of the Platte mostly to themselves. The discovery of gold in California, however, brought thousands of non-Mormon emigrants to Kanesville starting in 1849. By 1852 more people began using Kanesville as the jumping-off point than any other single place – even the Nebraska City, Nebraska, the St. Joseph, Missouri, and the Kansas City, Missouri, areas. The Mormons who trekked to Salt Lake had become a distinct minority among the travelers. By the mid-1850s, the number of western emigrants began to decline despite the appearance of the Mormon handcart groups that passed through Council Bluffs between 1856 and 1860.

The Pike's Peak gold discovery in Colorado revived Council Bluffs in 1858, and this revival lasted into the 1860s because of further finds in Montana and Idaho. Only the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 brought quiescence over Council Bluffs. Historian Merrill J. Mattes has estimated that one third of all those to follow the Platte River westward moved through Council Bluffs and traversed the north side of that river.

Historic Resources

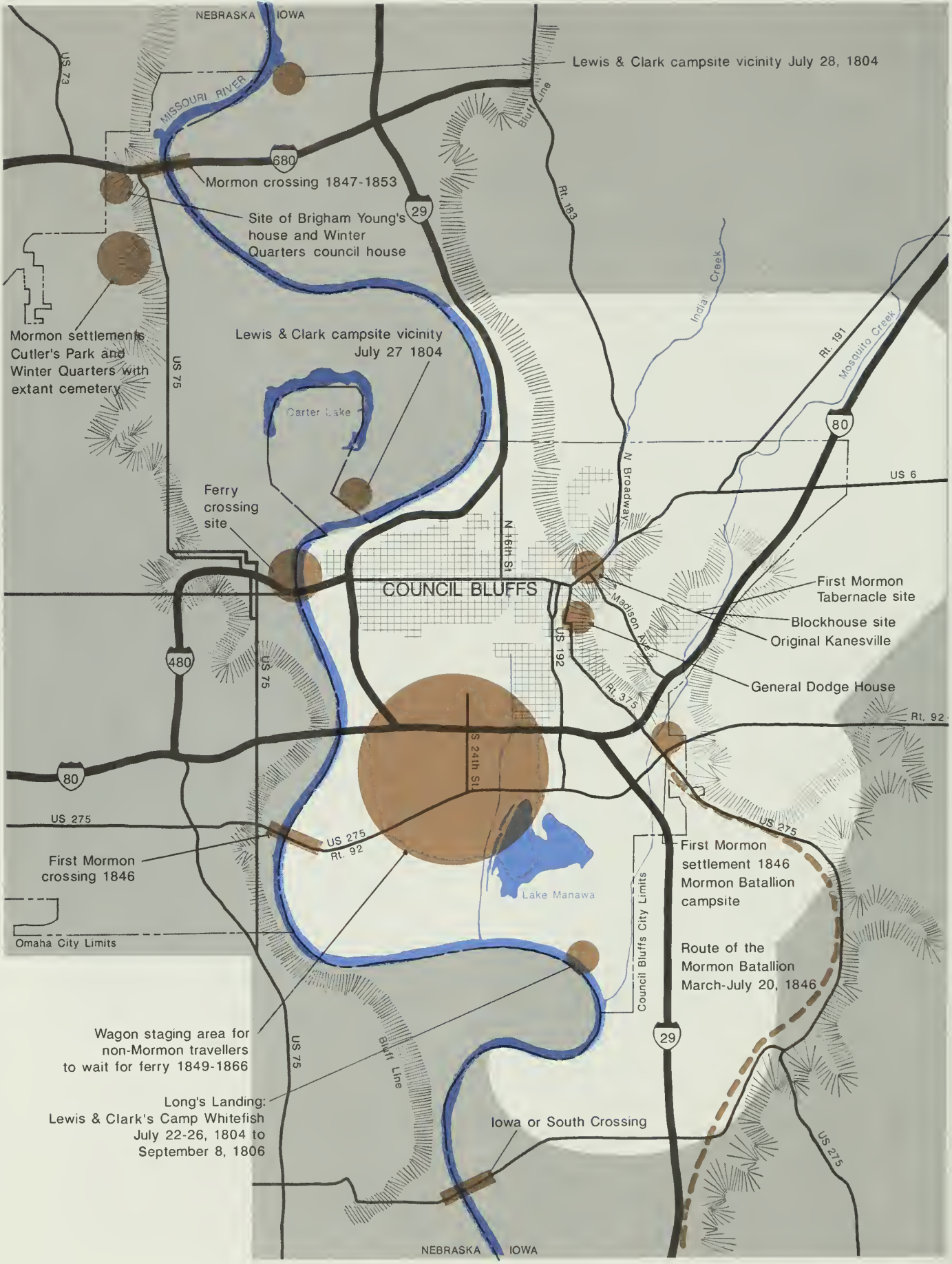
In the arena of exploration and settlement of the American frontier, the site of Council Bluffs shared in the vigor of the western movement. Despite the impact of this spirited endeavor on the growth of the West, no extant remains mark the passing of any group through Council Bluffs, although general sites abound (see Historic Sites map). Although three Lewis and Clark encampments are in the Council Bluffs vicinity, only one campsite marks the passage of the expedition through the area.

Camp White Catfish. The men of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who began their journey on May 14. 1804, to follow the Missouri River and other water routes to the Pacific Ocean, camped on the Iowa riverbank just below present-day Lake Manawa State Park. At this location, which they named Camp White Catfish, the party lingered from day's end on July 22 until the morning of July 27. Their efforts to contact area Indians at that site proved to be a failure. On their return from the Pacific Ocean, the Lewis and Clark party also spent the night of September 8, 1806, at the same place.

Camp near Present-day Eppley Field. On the morning of July 27, 1804, the party set sail with a gentle southerly breeze and moved upstream 15 miles from Camp White Catfish. Except for one man cutting his knee badly, the day proved uneventful. That evening the group camped on the present-day Nebraska shore in a thicket of small trees.

Camp above Present-day Interstate 680 Bridge. Despite some rain on the morning of July 28, 1804, the Corps of Discovery again moved upstream. After traveling 1 mile, the group found that the bluffs on the right (Iowa) side were close to the river. This high land near the river was the first such area encountered on that side of the river in some days. After traveling 10 3/4 miles, the party encamped on the current Iowa side, approximately 2 miles above the present-day Interstate 680 bridge. That evening when George Drewyer returned from hunting, he brought a Missouri Indian with him. This man, who lived in a nearby Otoe village, told Lewis and Clark that most of the men of the village were on the prairie hunting buffalo. The next day a Frenchman named La Liberty was dispatched with the Indian to make contact with the Otoe. That contact led to a meeting on the Nebraska side some 10 miles upstream at a site near present-day Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, which Lewis and Clark named "council bluff."

Several sites in the Council Bluffs area are associated with the occupation by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who abandoned Nauvoo, Illinois, and began their quest for a western home in 1846. The site of present-day Council Bluffs became their first objective. The Mormons used several trails across Iowa as they traveled west.



Historic Sites

Western Historic Trails Center

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
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First Mormon Settlement, Mormon Battalion Site, and Mormon March Route. The first group of Mormons to come to the area established camp near Mosquito Creek. Many members of the Mormon battalion were recruited from this camp to fight in the Mexican War. The battalion also began its trek to California from this site, heading south along the face of the bluffs east of the Missouri River.

Kanesville, Mormon Ferry Site, and Tabernacle Site. While many of the first occupants moved to the Nebraska side of the river by way of a ferry at the present-day Highway 275 bridge, other Mormons developed a village on the locale of later downtown Council Bluffs. Residing there until 1853, these people named their settlement Kanesville. In Kanesville, on a site near the corner of Harmony and Benton Streets, they built their first tabernacle. In that structure (which no longer exists), Brigham Young was confirmed as church president on December 24, 1847.

Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters Sites and Graveyard. Although the Latter-day Saints chose the Council Bluffs area as their first goal in the movement west, they found the opposite side of the Missouri River to be attractive as well. After receiving permission from the Omaha Indians whose land covered the area, Brigham Young began to move some people across the river in early July 1846. In the area of the present-day section of north Omaha known as Florence, two settlements were established. The first of these was Cutler's Park. Succeeding people founded the adjacent Winter Quarters settlement, which soon outgrew Cutler's Park. By the end of September 1846, Winter Quarters was a town with 820 surveyed lots; before Christmas that year the town had a population of approximately 3,500 and contained 700 log homes.

In late 1847 federal Indian agents became concerned because the inhabitants of Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters were stripping the countryside of timber and game. In their view such a circumstance caused a hardship for the Omaha Indians. As a result, the Mormons abandoned these towns in May 1848 and moved east of the river to the Kanesville area.

Living conditions at Cutler's Park and Winter Quarters proved difficult, especially during the first winter. Limited diets, which lacked fresh fruits and vegetables, caused many to contract scurvy. The people, who died of scurvy as well as consumption, flu, and other causes, were buried in a cemetery that was common to both settlements. Between mid-September 1846 and May 1848, 359 Mormons were interred in that cemetery. The Latter-day Saints Church has established a visitor center at this cemetery.

Site of Brigham Young's Home and Winter Quarters Council House. At the time Brigham Young directed Mormon migrants to quarters on the west side of the Missouri River in 1846, he also chose to reside in that area. His home in the 1846 to 1848 period was just north of the Winter Quarters settlement. A council house, which served as a civic center and local church headquarters, was adjacent to Young's home.

Mormon Crossing. In 1847, at the point where present-day Interstate 680 crosses the Missouri River, the Mormons established a ferry to facilitate their westward movement to Salt Lake on what has been designated as the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. The ferry remained in operation into the 1853 season when a call was made to area Mormon residents to relocate to Utah.

Although the Oregon Trail was identified as an interpretive subject in the legislation authorizing the trails center, that trail did not pass through Iowa or connect with Council Bluffs. Those who traveled to Oregon in the 1843-48 period generally traversed a route from Independence, Missouri, diagonally across northeastern Kansas to the Platte River at Fort Kearney, Nebraska. Some missionaries, such as Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker, passed through the present-day Council Bluffs area on their way to Oregon in the mid 1830s. These few individuals, however, neither represented

the Oregon settlement drive of the 1843-48 era nor did they follow the route normally identified as the Oregon Trail.

Beginning in 1849, numerous people sought to move west using the passage through Council Bluffs and generally following the north side of the Platte and North Platte Rivers. Some of these people did go to Oregon, but until the mid 1850s the overwhelming majority had California as their destination. In recognition of this movement, this route will soon be designated as the California National Historic Trail. Although the California Trail had several points of origin, the Council Bluffs branch came to be the most favored route. By 1858 most people moving west from Council Bluffs were heading to Colorado. In the 1860s the primary destination changed to the gold fields of Montana and Idaho. Several Council Bluffs sites are associated with the general non-Mormon westward movement of the 1849-66 period. These include an area used by wagon parties while they awaited ferry transport across the Missouri River.

Non-Mormon Wagon Staging Area. This area, between Council Bluffs and the river, was described as filled with little villages of tents, generally arranged in circles with the white covered wagons near each circle. In addition vast herds of mules, horses, and oxen occupied the area.

Non-Mormon Ferry Site. The other location involved the ferry established to move these non-Mormon travelers across the river. In the area of the present-day Interstate 480 bridge, the ferry location varied, the exact location dictated each year by shifting sandbars.

By 1852 more people gathered in the Council Bluffs area yearly than at any other single assembly point for western migration.

Archeological Resources

Considering the amount of human activity that has occurred in the Council Bluffs area since the time of the trails era, the likelihood of the presence of trail-related archeological resources is minimal. No tangible archeological remains related to trails history are known to exist in the area.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Socioeconomic History

From 1849 into the 1860s Council Bluffs was an outfitting town for western travelers. Those who chose to leave for California from Kanesville in 1849 overwhelmed the Mormon merchants with their requests for supplies. Seeing that the gold rush was no fluke, those merchants prepared for the following year's migration. As a result, the local business owners profited greatly. Buoyed by the prospect of greater financial returns, Orson Hyde, the editor of the *Frontier Guardian*, began to circulate his paper in 12 states. He advertised that Kanesville offered the shortest and safest cholera-free route to the West along the north side of the Platte River. He also noted that supplies were cheaper in Kanesville than other debarkation points to the south. Another gimmick he used was printing emigrants' names in each edition. This prompted those individuals to purchase the papers and send them home where hometown folks read the Kanesville propaganda and spread the word about that route to the West.

In 1853 the remainder of the Kanesville area Mormons were called to Salt Lake City. Businesses and farmsteads alike were sold or abandoned, and most of the Saints departed. Gentiles replaced the Mormon businessmen. In 1853 these people changed the town name from Kanesville to Council Bluffs. Although the population dropped after the Mormons left, the new merchants continued to outfit wagon trains. Two newspapers – the *Weekly Bugle* and the *Weekly Nonpareil* – replaced the *Frontier Guardian* of Mormon days. Both Council Bluffs newspapers and the newly established Board of Trade (Chamber of Commerce) did much to encourage emigrants to come through town on their way to Colorado. These promotions brought increasing numbers of emigrants during the 1860s as gold discoveries spread to Montana and Idaho. At times these advertisements contained dishonest elements, like the

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